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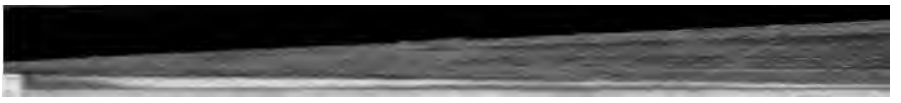

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

AND

THE LAMENTATIONS.

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AND

THE LAMENTATIONS.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN, AND EDITED

BY THE REV. JOHN OWEN,

VICAR OF THRUSSINGTON, AND RURAL DEAN, LEICESTERSHIRE.

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M.DCCC.LIV.

"AN INTERPRETER (CALVIN) OF PRIME NOTE."—*Gataker.*

"I KNOW NO MAN, SINCE THE APOSTLES' DAYS, WHOM I VALUE AND HONOUR MORE THAN CALVIN, AND WHOSE JUDGMENT IN ALL THINGS, ONE WITH ANOTHER, I MORE ESTEEM AND COME NEARER TO."—*Richard Baxter.*

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

"HOWEVER MEN MAY DIFFER WITH REGARD TO THE CORRECTNESS, OR OTHERWISE, OF CALVIN'S OPINIONS AS TO GOD'S MIND RESPECTING US HIS CREATURES, THERE IS BUT ONE SENTIMENT OF HIS VALUE AS A CRITIC AND EXPOUNDER."—*Dr. Lewellin, Principal of St. David's College, Lampeter.*

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COMMENTARIES

ON

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

CHAPTER XXX.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,
2. Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.
3. For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

1. Sermo qui fuit ad Jeremiam a Jehova dicendo,
2. Sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, dicendo, Scribe tibi omnes sermones quos loquutus sum ad te in libro:
3. Quoniam ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et reducam captivitatem populi mei Israel et Jehudah, dicit Jehovah; et reducam eos in terram quam dedi patribus ipsorum et possidebunt eam.

THIS and the next chapter contain, as we shall see, a most profitable truth; and that the people might be the more attentive, God introduced these prophecies by a preface. Jeremiah spoke many things which afterwards, as it has elsewhere appeared, had been collected and inserted in one volume by the priests and Levites; but God reminds us in these words, that the prophecies which are to follow respecting the liberation of the people, were especially to be remembered.

There is, however, another circumstance to be noticed. We have seen that such was the stubbornness of the people, that Jeremiah spent his labour among them in vain, for he addressed the deaf, or rather stocks and stones, for they were so possessed by stupor that they understood nothing, for God had even blinded them, a judgment which they fully deserved. Such was the condition of the people. We must further bear in mind the comparison between the

doctrine of Jeremiah and the fables of those who fed the miserable people with flatteries, by giving them the hope of a return after two years. God knew what would be the event; but the people ceased not to entertain hope and to boast of a return at the end of two years. Thus they despised God's favour, for seventy years was a long period: "What! God indeed promises a return, but after seventy years who of us will be alive? Hardly one of us will be found then remaining, therefore so cold a promise is nothing to us." They, at the same time, as I have said, were filled with a false confidence, as with wind, and behaved insolently towards God and his prophets, as though they were to return sound and safe in a short time.

But profane men always run to extremes; at one time they are inflated with pride, that is, when things go on prosperously, or when a hope of prosperity appears, and they carry themselves proudly against God, as though nothing adverse could happen to them; then when hope and false conceit disappoint them, they are wholly disheartened, so that they will receive no comfort, but plunge into the abyss of despair. God saw that this would be the case with the people, except he came to their aid. Hence he proposes here the best and the fittest remedy—that the Prophet, as he had effected nothing by speaking, should write and convert as it were into deeds or acts what he had spoken,[1] so that after the lapse of two years they might gather courage, and afterwards acknowledge that they had been deceived by unprincipled men, and thus justly suffered for their levity, so that they might at length begin to look to God and embrace the promised liberation, and not wholly despond. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet was commanded to write the words which he had before declared with his mouth.

Now, as we understand the design of God, let us learn

[1] "In a book:" the בְּ before "book" is in some copies בַּ, as in other places when preceded by "write." It may be more literally rendered, "on a roll;" but if בְּ be retained, the rendering may be, "for a record," or memorial. *Venema* thinks that these two chapters were written *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, and that as there were no people to be addressed, Jeremiah was bidden to commit to writing what he had often previously delivered by word of mouth.—*Ed.*

that when it happens that we go astray and wander after false imaginations, we are not on that account to cast away the hope of salvation; for we see that God here stretches forth his hand to those who had erred, and who had even wilfully cast themselves into ruin, for they had been more than enough admonished and warned by true and faithful prophets; their ears they had stopped; their hearts they had hardened; and yet when they had sought as it were designedly to ruin themselves, we see how God still recalled them to himself.

He says that God had commanded him to *write in a book all the words* which he had heard; and the reason follows, *For, behold, come shall the days, saith Jehovah, in which I will restore the captivity of my people Israel and Judah.*[1] There is to be understood a contrast between the restoration mentioned here and that of which the false prophets had prattled when they animated the people with the hope of a return in a short time; for, as I have said, that false expectation, when the Jews sought unseasonably to return to their own country, was a sort of mental inebriety. But when they found that they had been deceived, despair only remained for them. Hence the Prophet recalls them here to a quietness of mind, even that they might know that God would prove faithful after they found out that they had rashly embraced what impostors had of themselves proclaimed. We then see that there is here an implied comparison between the sure and certain deliverance which God had promised, and the false and stolid hope with which the people had been inebriated: *come*, then, *shall the days.* Now it appears that two years had taken away every expectation; for they believed the false prophets who said that God would restore them in two years; after the end of that time all the hope of the people failed. Therefore the Prophet here removes that erroneous

[1] The words literally are, "For behold the days coming, saith Jehovah, when I shall restore the migration of my people, Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will restore them to the land which I gave to their fathers, and they shall inherit it." To render ו *when*, when preceded by a participle, is what may be done, and ought, in my view, to be commonly done. The word שבות means a migration, as given in the *Targum*, rather than captivity. It is rendered by the *Sept.* ἀποικία, removal from home.—*Ed.*

impression which had been made on their minds, and he says that *the days* would *come* in which God would redeem his people; and thus he indirectly derides the folly of the people, and condemns the impiety of those who had dared to promise so quick a return.

We now, then, see why he says, *come shall the days;* for every hope after two years would have been extinguished, had not God interposed. *Come,* then, *shall the days in which I will restore the captivity of Israel and Judah.* The ten tribes, we know, had been already led into exile; the tribe of Judah and the half tribe of Benjamin only remained. Hence the ten tribes, the whole kingdom of Israel, are mentioned first. The exile of Israel was much longer than that of Judah. It afterwards follows,—

4. And these *are* the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel, and concerning Judah.
5. For thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.
6. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

4. Hi vero sunt sermones quos loquutus est Jehova de Israele et Jehudah (*vel,* ad Israelem et ad Jehudah:)
5. Certe ita dicit Jehova, Vocem trepidationis audivimus, pavorem et non pacem (*vel,* pavoris et non pacis.)
6. Inquirite et aspicite an pariat masculus? quare video cunctos viros manibus suis super lumbos tanquam parturiens (solet mulier, *subaudiendum est, vel,* sicuti solet mulier parturiens,) et conversæ sunt omnes facies in pallorem (*vel,* in aurigi-nem, *ut alii vertunt, sed nomen* palloris *melius convenit?*)

Both Jews and Christians pervert this passage, for they apply it to the time of the Messiah; and when they hardly agree as to any other part of Scripture, they are wonderfully united here; but, as I have said, they depart very far from the real meaning of the Prophet.

They all consider this as a prophecy referring to the time of the Messiah; but were any one wisely to view the whole context, he would readily agree with me that the Prophet includes here the sum of the doctrine which the people had previously heard from his mouth. In the first clause he shews that he had spoken of God's vengeance, which rested on the people. But it is briefly that this clause touches on that point, because the object was chiefly to alleviate the sorrow of the afflicted people; for the reason ought ever to

be borne in mind why the Prophet had been ordered to commit to writing the substance of what he had taught, which was, to supply with some comfort the exiles, when they had found out by experience that they had been extremely perverse, having for so long a time never changed nor turned to repentance. The Prophet had before spoken at large of the vices of the people, and many times condemned their obstinacy, and also pointed out the grievous and dreadful punishment that awaited them. The Prophet then had in many a discourse reproved the people, and had been commanded daily to repeat the same thing, though not for his own sake, nor mainly for the sake of those of his own age, or of the old. But after God had destroyed the Temple and the city, his object was to sustain their distressed minds, which must have otherwise been overwhelmed with despair. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet here touches but slightly on the vengeance which awaited the people. There is, however, as we shall see, great force in this brevity; but he is much fuller as to the second part, and for this end, that the people might not succumb under their calamities, but hope in the midst of death, and even begin to hope while suffering the punishment which they deserved.

Now he says, *Thus saith Jehovah, A cry*, or, the voice of trembling, or of fear, *have we heard.* The word חרדה, *cherede*, is thought to mean properly that dread which makes the whole body to tremble, and is therefore rendered trembling. God speaks, and yet in the person of the people. Why? In order to expose their insensibility; for as they were obstinate in their wickedness, so they were not terrified by threatenings, however many and dreadful. God dictated words for them, for they were altogether void of feeling. We now see why God assumed the person of those who were secure, though Jeremiah daily represented to them God's vengeance as near at hand. The meaning is, that though the people were asleep in their sins, and thought themselves beyond the reach of danger, even when God was displeased with them, yet the threatenings by which God sought to lead them to repentance would not be in vain. Hence God says, *We have heard the voice of fear;* that is, "Deride and scoff

as you please, or remain insensible in your delusions, so as to disregard as the drunken what is said, being destitute of feeling, reason, and memory, yet God will extort from you this confession, this voice of trembling and fear."

He then adds, *and not of peace.* This is emphatically subjoined, that the Prophet might shake off from the people those foolish delusions with which they were imbued by the false prophets. He then says, that they in vain hoped for peace, for they could not flee from terror and fear. He enhances this fear by saying, *Inquire and see whether a man is in labour?* Some one renders this absurdly, "Whether a man begets?" by which mistake he has betrayed a defect of judgment as well as ignorance; he was indeed learned in Hebrew, but ignorant of Latin, and also void of judgment. For the Prophet here speaks of something monstrous; but it is natural for a man to beget. He asks here ironically, "Can a man be in labour?" because God would put all men in such pains and agonies, as though they were women travailing with child. As, then, women exert every nerve and writhe in anguish when bringing forth draws nigh, so also men, all the men, would have their hands laid on their loins, on account of their terror and dread. Then he says, *and all faces are turned into paleness;* that is, God would terrify them all.

We now understand the meaning of the Prophet; for as the Jews did not believe God's judgment, it was necessary, as the Prophet does here, to storm their hardness. If he had used a common mode of speaking, they would not have been moved. Hence he had respect to their perverseness; and it was on this account that he was so vehement. *Inquire,* then, he says, *and see whether a man is in labour?* God would bring all the men to a condition not manly, such as that of a woman in labour, when in her last effort to bring forth, when her pain is the greatest and the most bitter. Men would then be driven into a state the most unbecoming, strange, and monstrous. It follows:—

7. Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it; it *is* even the time of	7. Heus, quia magnus hic dies à non esse sicut ipsum (*hoc est*, ut non sit similis, ut nunquam fuerit similis,) et tempus afflictionis

Jacob's trouble: but he shall be saved out of it.

(*vel*, angustiæ) hoc ipsi Jacob (*hoc est*, populo Israelitico,) et ab ea servabitur.

The Prophet goes on in this verse to describe the grievousness of that punishment for which the people felt no concern, for they disregarded all threatenings, as I have already said, and had now for many years hardened themselves so as to deem as nothing so many dreadful things. This, then, was the reason why he dwelt so much on this denunciation, and exclaimed, *Alas! great is that day:* "great" is to be taken for dreadful; and he adds, *so that there is none like it.* It was a dreadful spectacle to see the city destroyed, and the Temple partly pulled down and partly consumed by fire: the king, with all the nobility, was driven into exile, his eyes were put out, and his children were slain; and he was afterwards led away in a manner so degraded, that to die a hundred times would have been more desirable than to endure such indignity. Hence the Prophet does not say without reason, that *that day* would be *great*, so that none would be *like it:* and he said this, to shake away the torpidity of the people, for they thought that the holy city, which God had chosen for his habitation, could not fall, nor the Temple perish. He further says, that it would be *a time of distress* to the people. But at the end of the verse he gives them a hope of God's mercy, even deliverance from this distress. We now, then, see the design of the Prophet in these verses.[1]—There will be no Lecture to-morrow on account of the Consistory.

[1] "That day" in this verse, and "that day" in the following verse, seem to be the same. Then הוֹי must not be rendered "Alas," but "Ho!" or "Hark!" according to its most common meaning. The passage from verse the 4th to the end of this, including the beginning of the 8th, may be thus rendered,—

4. Even these are the words which Jehovah hath said respecting
   Israel and respecting Judah:
5. Verily thus hath Jehovah said—
   (The voice of trembling have we heard,
   Of fear and not of peace:
6. Ask ye now and see,
   Does a man travail with child?
   How is it? I see every man
   With his hands on his loins like a woman in travail,
   And turned are all faces to paleness:)
7. Hark! for great *shall be* that day, none like it;

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not in various ways perversely to provoke thy wrath against us, — O grant that we may at length be turned to obedience by thy kind admonitions, and at the same time submit also to thy just severity, and know that whenever thou severely chastisest us, we are dealt with as we deserve: may we yet never despond, but flee to thy mercy, not doubting but that thou in the midst of wrath rememberest thy paternal love, provided we rely on that favour which thou hast promised to us through thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fourteenth.

8. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, *that* I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him:

8. Et erit die illo, dicit Jehova exercituum, confringam jugum a collo tuo, et vincula tua disrumpam et non adigent amplius eum ad servitutem alieni:

JEREMIAH proceeds with what he touched upon in the last verse, even that the Lord, after having chastised his people, would at length shew mercy to them, so as to receive them into favour. He says, in short, that their captivity would not be perpetual. But we must remember what we have before stated, that is, that deliverance is only promised to the faithful, who would patiently and resignedly submit to God and not disregard his paternal correction. If, then, we desire God to be propitious to us, we must suffer ourselves to be paternally chastised by him; for if we resist when goaded, no pardon can by any means be expected, for we then, as it were, wilfully provoke God by our hardness.

He therefore says, *in that day*, that is, when the appointed time was completed. The false prophets inflamed the people with false expectation, as though their deliverance was to take place after two years. God bade the faithful to wait, and not to be thus in a hurry; he had assigned a day for

> Though a time of distress shall be to Jacob,
> Yet from it shall he be saved:
> 8. And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts,
> That I shall break, &c. &c.

The parenthesis accounts for what is said at the end of the 7th verse, and is intended as a contrast with the great day of deliverance that is promised.—*Ed.*

them, and that was, as we have seen, the seventieth year. He then mentions the *yoke*, that is, of the king of Babylon, and taking another view, *the chains*. The yoke was what Nebuchadnezzar laid on the Jews; and the chains of the people were those by which Nebuchadnezzar had bound them. At last he adds, *And rule over them shall no more strangers*. The verb עבד, *obed*, is to be taken here in a causative sense; even the form of the sentence shews this, and they who render the words, "and strangers shall not serve them," wrest the meaning; for it could not be a promise; and this is inconsistent with the context, and requires no confutation, as it is evidently unsuitable. If the verb be taken in the sense of serving, then "strangers" must be in the dative case. We have seen before a similar phrase in chap. xxv. 14, where the Prophet says that neither kings nor strong nations would any longer rule over the Jews. The same verb is used, and the same form of expression. *Strangers*, then, *shall make them serve no more;* that is, they shall not rule over them so as slavishly to oppress them.[1]

We now perceive the design of the Prophet; he exhorts the Jews to patience, and shews that though their exile would be long, yet their deliverance was certain. It follows,—

9. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.	9. Et servient Jehovæ Deo suo et Davidi regi suo quem suscitabo ipsis.

The former promise would have been defective had not this clause been added; for it would not be enough for men to live as they please, and to have liberty promised them, except a regular order be established. It would, indeed, be better for us to be wild beasts, and to wander in forests, than

[1] I render the verse as follows,—

8. And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts,
That I shall break his yoke from thy neck,
And thy chains will I burst:
And make him to serve shall strangers no more:
9. But serve shall they Jehovah, &c.

The transition from the second to the third person, "thy" and "him," and from the singular to the plural, "him" and "they," is very common in the Prophets. On the last line in the 8th verse, see vol. iii., *note* in p. 361.—*Ed.*

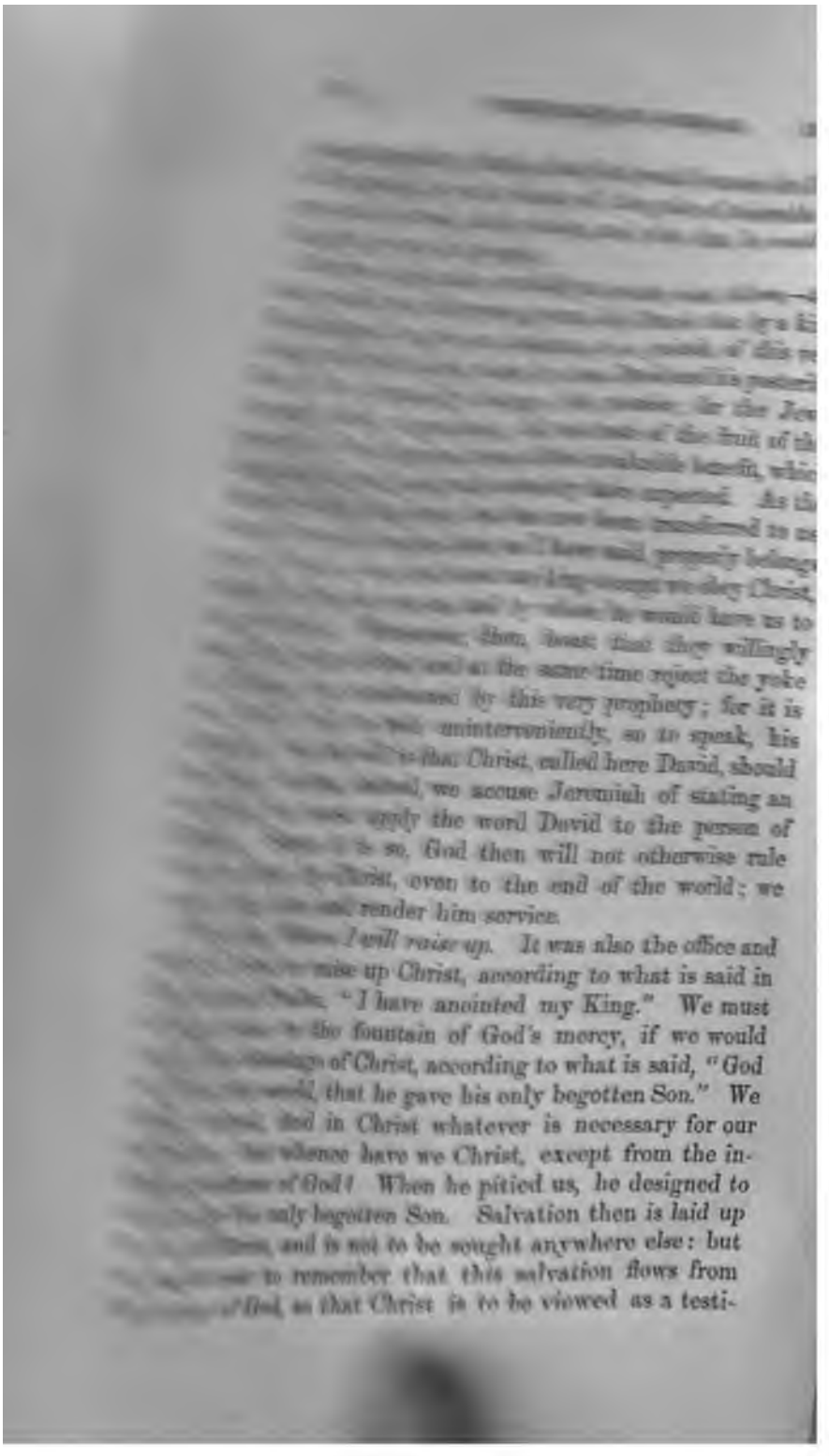
to live without government and laws; for we know how furious are the passions of men. Unless, therefore, there be some restraint, the condition of wild beasts would be better and more desirable than ours. Liberty, then, would ever bring ruin with it, were it not bridled and connected with regular government. I therefore said that this verse was added, that the Jews might know that God cared for their welfare; for he promises that nothing would be wanting to them. It is then a true and real happiness, when not only liberty is granted to us, but also when God prescribes to us a certain rule and sets up good order, that there may be no confusion. Hence Jeremiah, after having promised a return to the people into their own country, and promised also that the yoke would be shaken off from their neck, makes this addition, that having served strangers they would be now under the government of God and of their own king. Now this subjection is better than all the ruling powers of the world; that is, when God is pleased to rule over us, and undertakes the care of our safety, and performs the office of a Governor.

We hence see that the design of the Prophet was to comfort the faithful, not only with the promise of liberty, but also with this addition, that in order that nothing might be wanting to their complete happiness, God himself would rule over them. *Serve*, then, *shall they their God.* The word *king* is added, because God designed that his people should be governed by a king, not that the king would sit in the place of God, but added as his minister. Now this was said a long time after the death of David; for David was dead many years before Jeremiah was born: nor did he live again in order that he might rule over the people; but the name of David is to be taken here for any one that might succeed him.

Now, as God had made a covenant with David, and promised that there would be always one of his posterity to sit on his throne, hence the Prophet here, in mentioning David, refers to all the kings until Christ: and yet no one after that time succeeded him, for the kingdom was abolished before the death of Jeremiah; and when the people returned into

their own country there was no regal power, for Zerubbabel obtained only a precarious dignity, and by degrees that royal progeny vanished away; and though there were seventy chosen from the seed of David, yet there was no sceptre, no crown, no throne. It is therefore necessary to apply this prophecy to Christ; for the crown was broken and trodden under foot, as Ezekiel says, until the lawful king came. He intimated that there was no king to be for a long time, when he said, "Cast down, cast down, cast down the crown." (Ezek. xxi. 27.) He therefore commanded the name of a king to be abolished, together with all its symbols, and that not for a short time but for ages, even until he came forth who had a just right to the crown or the royal diadem. We hence see that this passage cannot be otherwise explained than by referring to Christ, and that he is called David, as the Jews were always wont to call him before Christ appeared in the world; for they called the Messiah, whom they expected, the Son of David. We now understand the meaning of the Prophet.

But we may hence gather a very useful doctrine, even this,—that nothing is better for us than to be in subjection to God; for our liberty would become that of wild beasts were God to allow us to live according to our own humour and inclinations. Liberty, then, will ever be destructive to us, until God undertakes the care of us, and prepares and forms us, that we may bear his yoke. Hence, when we obey God, we possess true and real happiness. When, therefore, we pray, let us learn not to separate these two things which ought necessarily to be joined together, even that God would deliver us from the tyranny of the ungodly, and also that he would himself rule over us. And this doctrine is suitable to our time: for if God were now only to break down the tyranny of the Pope and deliver his own people, and suffer them to wander here and there, so as to allow every one to follow his own will as his law, how dreadful would be the confusion! It is better that the devil should rule men under any sort of government, than that they should be set free without any law, without any restraint. Our time, indeed, sufficiently proves, that these two things have not, without reason, been



mony and a pledge of God's paternal favour towards us. This is the reason why the Prophet expressly adds, that God would *raise up* a king to rule over his people. It follows—

10. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid.

10. Et tu ne timeas, Jacob, serve mi, dicit Jehova, et ne paveas, Israel, quia ecce ego servans te a longinquo, et semen tuum e terra captivitatis eorum; et sedebit Jacob et quiescet et tranquillus erit, et nemo exterrebit (nemo exterrens, *ad verbum.*)

The Prophet enforces his doctrine by an exhortation; for it would not be sufficient simply to assure us of God's paternal love and goodwill, unless we were encouraged to hope for it, because experience teaches us how backward and slow we are to embrace the promises of God. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet exhorts and encourages the faithful to entertain hope. Were there in us that promptitude and alacrity which we ought to have, we should be content even with one word; for what can be wished for beyond God's testimony respecting his favour? But our listlessness renders many goads necessary. Hence, when doctrine precedes, it is necessary to add exhortations to stimulate us; and these confirm the doctrine, so that the grace of God may flourish effectually in our hearts.

He addresses "Jacob" and "Israel;" but they mean the same, as in many other places. These duplicates, as they are called, are common, we know, in the Hebrew language; for the same words are repeated for the sake of emphasis. So, in this passage, there is more force when Jeremiah mentions two names, than if he had said only, "Fear not thou, Jacob, and be not afraid." He then says, *Fear not thou, Jacob; and Israel, be not thou afraid.*[1] And he does this, that the Jews might remember that God had not only been once propitious to their father Jacob, but many times; for from the

[1] The word is stronger than "fear;" it means to be broken down in mind, to be dispirited, so as to give up all hope. The distance, mentioned in the following clause, was calculated to dispirit them, and they feared lest their children should continue in bondage. Hence it is said, "Fear not," that is, as to a final return; and "be not dispirited," or disheartened, with respect to the distance. The order, as is commonly the case, is reversed.—*Ed.*

womb he bore a symbol of that primogeniture which God had destined for him; and he afterwards had, for the sake of honour, the name of Israel given to him. As, then, God had in various ways, and in succession, manifested his goodness to Jacob, the people might hence entertain more hope.

He calls him his *servant;* not that the Jews were worthy of so honourable a title; but God had regard to himself, and his gratuitous adoption, rather than to their merits. He did not then call them servants, because they were obedient, for we know how contumaciously they rejected both God and his Prophets; but because he had adopted them. So when David says, "I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid, (Ps. cxvi. 16;) he does not boast of his obedience, nor claim to himself any deserving virtue, but, on the contrary, declares, that before he was created in the womb, he was God's servant through his gratuitous adoption. Hence, he adds, "I am the son of thine handmaid," as though he had said, "I belong to thee by an hereditary right, because I am descended from that nation which thou hast been pleased to choose for thy peculiar people." We now then see that the name *servant*, ought not to be understood as intimating the merits of the people, and that their obedience is not here commended, as though they had truly and faithfully responded to the call of God, but that their gratuitous adoption is alone extolled.

He adds, *Behold, I will save thee from far.* He first declares that he would be ready to save the people when the suitable time came; for *behold* here intimates certainty. And he subjoins, *from far*, lest the people should fail in their confidence; for they had been driven into distant exile; and distance is a great obstacle. Were any one to promise to us an advantageous retreat, without calling us away to some unknown country, we could more easily embrace the promise; but were any one to say, "I promise to you the largest income in Syria, and you shall have there whatever may be deemed necessary to make your life happy;" would you not reply, "What! shall I pass over the sea, that I may live there? it is better for me to live here in comparative poverty than to be a king there." As, then, a difficulty might

have presented itself to the Jews, when they saw that they had been driven away into very remote countries, the Prophet adds, that this circumstance would be no obstacle so as to prevent God to save them: *I will save you* then *from far;* as though he had said, that his hands were long enough, so that he could extend them as far as Chaldea, and draw them from thence.

He then adds, *and thy seed from the land of their captivity.* As the expectation of seventy years was long, God refers what he promises to their seed. There is no doubt but that the Prophet reminded the Jews, that the time determined by God was to be waited for in patience, as was the case with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for though they knew that they would be strangers in the land which God had promised them, yet they did not on that account despise or disregard the favour promised them. Abraham received in faith what he had heard from God's mouth, "I will give thee this land;" and yet he knew that he would be there a stranger and a sojourner. (Gen. xii. 7.) His children had to exercise the same patience. Abraham had indeed been warned of a very long delay; for God had declared that his seed would be in bondage for four hundred years. (Gen. xv. 13.) Here, then, the Prophet exhorts the people of his time to entertain hope, according to the example of their father, and not to despise God's favour, because its fruit did not immediately appear; for Abraham did not enjoy the land as long as he lived, and yet he preferred it to his own country; Isaac did the same; and Jacob followed the example of his fathers. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet mentions *seed,* as though he had said, "If the fruit of redemption will not come to you, yet God will not disappoint your hope, for your posterity shall find that he is true and faithful."

If any one had then objected, and said, "What is that to me?" the objection would have been preposterous; for why had God promised to their posterity a return to their own country? was it not thus to testify his love towards them? And whence came their freedom, and whence God's paternal love, except from the covenant? We hence see that the sal-

vation of the fathers was included in the benefit which their sons enjoyed. And therefore, though the fruition of that benefit was not visibly granted to the fathers, yet they partook in part of the fruit, for it was made certain to them, that God would become the deliverer of his people even in death itself.

He adds that which is the main thing in a happy life, that they would be *at rest and in a quiet state*, so that none would *terrify* them;[1] for a return to their own country would not have been of any great importance, without a quiet possession of it. Hence the Prophet, after having said that God would come to save the people, and that distance would not prevent him to fulfil and complete what he had promised, now adds, that this benefit would be confirmed, for God would no more allow strangers to lead the Jews into exile, or to rule over them as they had done. God then promises here the continuance of his favour.

But as this did not happen to the Jews, we must again conclude that this prophecy cannot be otherwise interpreted than of Christ's kingdom. And Daniel is the best interpreter of this matter; for he says, that the people were to be exposed to many miseries and calamities after their return, and that they were not to hope to build the Temple and the city except in great troubles. The Jews then were always terrified. We also know, that while building the Temple, they held the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other, for they often had to bear the assaults of their enemies. (Neh. iv. 17.) Since, then, the Jews ever suffered inquietude until the coming of Christ, it follows, that until his coming, this promise was never accomplished. Then the benefit of which the Prophet speaks here is peculiar to the kingdom of Christ. Now, since from the time Christ was

[1] *Calvin* renders שָׁב, "dwell," as though it came from יָשַׁב, but most render it "return," as in our version. Then, "to be at rest," and "in a quiet state," are not sufficiently distinct. I render the clause thus,—

And return shall Jacob and be at rest,
And secure shall he be, and none making him afraid.

Security is freedom from disturbance: "he shall be prosperous," as rendered by some, is by no means suitable. "Jacob," being the father of the twelve patriarchs, is to be understood as including both Israel and Judah, according to the 4th verse.—*Ed.*

manifested to the world, we see that the world has been agitated by many storms, yea, all things have been in confusion; it follows, that this passage cannot be explained of external rest and earthly tranquillity. It ought, therefore, to be understood according to the character of his kingdom. As, then, Christ's kingdom is spiritual, it follows that a tranquil and quiet state is promised here, not because no enemies shall disturb us or offer us molestation, but because we shall especially enjoy peace with God, and our life shall be safe, being protected by the hand and guardianship of God. Then spiritual tranquillity is what is to be understood here, the fruit of which the faithful experience in their own consciences, though always assailed by the world, according to what Christ says, "My peace I give to you, not such as the world gives," (John xiv. 27;) and again, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John xvi. 33.) It follows—

11. For I *am* with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

11. Quoniam ego tecum, dicit Jehova, ad servandum te; nam faciam consumptionem in cunctis gentibus, ad quas dispergam te illuc; atqui tecum non faciam consumptionem, et castigabo te in judicio, et mundando non mundabo te (*vel*, purgando non purgabo te, *vel*, succidendo non succidam te: *dicemus postea de verbo.*)

He repeats in other words what we have already stated, but for the purpose of giving fuller support to trembling and wavering minds. God then promises that he would be present with his people to save them. Now as this could not easily be believed, and as the Jews looking only on their state at that time could not but despair, the Prophet added this comparison between them and the Gentiles. The Chaldeans and the Assyrians flourished seventy years in every kind of wealth, in luxuries, in honour—in short, they possessed every thing necessary for an earthly happiness. What, then, could the Jews have thought, but that unbelievers and God's enemies were happy, but that they were miserable, being oppressed by hard servitude and loaded with many reproaches, and living also in poverty, and counted as sheep destined for the slaughter? When, there-

fore, all these things were plain before their eyes, what but despair must have laid hold on their minds? Therefore God obviates this evil;[1]

And he says that he would *make a consummation among the nations*, as though he had said, "When I begin to punish the Gentile nations, I will destroy them with an utter destruction, no hope will remain for them. But *as to thee, I will not make a consummation.*" Thus he makes a difference between the punishment inflicted on the reprobate and ungodly and that by which he would chastise the sins of his people; for the punishment he would inflict on the wicked would be fatal, while the punishment by which he would chastise his Church would be only for a time; it would therefore be to it for medicine and salvation.

We now, then, perceive what the Prophet had in view: he mitigated the bitterness of grief as to the faithful, for God would not wholly cast them away. And he shews that their scourges ought to be patiently borne, because they were to hope for an end of them; but that it would be different when he visited the reprobate, because he would leave them without any hope. In short, he says, that he would be a severe judge to the last degree as to the unbelieving, but that he would chastise his own people as a Father.

Other passages seem, however, to militate against this view; for God declares that he would make a consummation as to his chosen people, as in Isa. 10, 23, and in other places. But the explanation is obvious; for there he refers to the whole body of the people, which were alienated from him; but here his word is addressed to the faithful, "the remnant of grace," as Paul calls them, (Rom. xi. 5.) We ought, therefore, ever to consider who those are whom the Prophets address; for at one time they refer to the promiscuous mass, and at another time they address apart the

[1] There is no verb in the first clause, "Because I with thee." The context shews that the future is meant; then the rendering ought to be, "Because I *shall be* with thee;" that is, at the restoration of the people to their own land, mentioned in the preceding verse. So *Calvin* understood the clause, though the early versions, like our own, gave the verb in the present tense, which is by no means correct.—*Ed.*

faithful, and promise them salvation. Thus, then, we have before seen that God would make a consummation as to his people, that is, the reprobate ; but the Prophet here turns his discourse to the Church and the seed which God would preserve in safety among a people apparently cut off and lost. Whenever, therefore, the devil would drive us to despair, whenever we are harassed in our minds when God deals with us more severely than we expect, let this consolation be remembered, that God will not make a consummation with us; for what is here said of the Church may and ought to be applied to every individual believer. God, indeed, handles them often roughly when he sees it necessary for them, but he never wholly consumes them.

I will not make, he says, *a consummation with thee, but I will chastise thee in judgment.* Here the copulative ought to be taken as an adversative particle, and "judgment" has the sense of moderation, as we have seen in chap. x. 24, "Chastise me, O Lord, but not in thy wrath ;" he had mentioned "judgment" before. In this sense is judgment used here, that is, for that moderation which God adopts towards his chosen, for he is ever mindful of his mercy, and regards not what they deserve, but what they can bear. When, therefore, God withholds his hand and gently chastises his people, he is said to punish them in judgment, that is, moderately. For judgment is not to be taken here for rectitude, because God never exceeds due limits so as to be subject to the charge of cruelty ; judgment is also opposed to just rigour, and it is often opposed to injustice; but in this place we are to understand that the contrast is between judgment and the just rigour of God. Then judgment is nothing else but the mitigation of wrath.

At last he adds, *By cleansing I will not cleanse thee,* or, "by cutting down I will not cut thee down." The verb, נקה, *nuke,* means sometimes to cleanse, or to render innocent ; and it means also intransitively to be pure and harmless ; but it is to be taken here transitively. It cannot, then, be rendered otherwise than "by cleansing I will not cleanse thee," or, "I will not cut thee down ;" for it has also this meaning, and either of the two senses is suitable. If

we read, "I will not cut thee down," it is the continuation of the same subject; "I will chastise thee in judgment, and I will not therefore cut thee down," that is, I will not make a consummation. It would then be, as it is evident, a very suitable connexion, and it would run smoothly were we to read, "I will not cut thee down." But the other version is also appropriate, though it may admit of a twofold meaning; some take it adversatively, "Though I shall not make thee innocent;" that is, though I shall not spare thee, but chastise thee moderately; and this intimation was very seasonable; for the flesh ever seeks impunity. Now God sees that it is not good for us to escape unpunished when we offend; it is then necessary to bear in mind this doctrine, that though God will not allow us to be exempt from punishment, nor indulge us, but smite us with his rods, he is yet moderate in his judgment towards us. But others refer to this passage in Isaiah, "I made thee to pass through the furnace and refined thee, but not as silver, otherwise thou wouldest have been consumed." (Is. xlviii. 10.) God then tries his people, or cleanses them with chastisements; but how? or, how long?—not as silver and gold, for that would wholly consume them. For when silver is purged from its dross, and also gold, the purer and clearer portion remains; but men, as there is nothing in them but vanity, would be wholly consumed, were God to try them as silver and gold. But as this interpretation is too refined, I am more disposed to adopt one of the two first, that is, that God would not wholly cut them down, though he would chastise them, or, that though he would not count or regard them wholly innocent, nor so indulge them as to let them go unpunished, he would yet be merciful and propitious to them, as he would connect judgment with his chastisements, that they might not be immoderate.[1]

[1] This clause is rendered by the *Vulg.*, "that thou mayest not seem to thyself innocent;" by the *Syr.*, "but I will not suffer thee to be wholly unpunished;" and by the *Targ.*, "and destroying I will not destroy thee." Both *Venema* and *Blayney* follow the meaning of the *Targum*; the later version is, "And will not make thee altogether desolate." The phrase occurs in chap. xxv. 29, and also in Ex. xxxiv. 7; Numb. xiv. 18; Nah. i. 3; in which places the idea of the verb is, to hold guiltless or innocent,

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are born wholly alienated from thy kingdom and the hope of salvation, and as a dreadful scattering awaits us except thou gatherest us by the power and grace of thy Spirit,—O grant, that as thou hast once adopted us as thy people, and hast been pleased to gather us under the yoke of Christ, we may remain in obedience to him, and thus continue under thy government, that after having completed our course in this life, we may at length come unto that kingdom where we shall enjoy all those good things which we now only by hope taste, through the same, Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifteenth.

12. For thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise *is* incurable, *and* thy wound *is* grievous.

12. Quoniam sic dicit Jehova, gravitas confractioni tuæ (*vel*, fracturæ, *alii vertunt*, contritionem, *quod idem est, nam* שבר *significat etiam* conterere,) ægra plaga tua.

THE design of the Prophet is first to be noticed: he was fighting with those impostors who gave hope of a return in a short time to the people, while seventy years, as it has been said, were to be expected. The Prophet then wished to shew to the people how foolishly they hoped for an end to their evils in so short a time. And this is what ought to be carefully observed, for it was not without reason that the Prophet dwelt much on this point; for nothing is more difficult than to lead men to a serious acknowledgment of God's judgment. When any thing adverse happens, they are tender and sensitive as to the evils they endure; but at the same time they look not to God, and comfort themselves with vain imaginations. It was therefore necessary for the Prophet to dwell on his doctrine at large; for he saw that the Israelites promised to themselves a return after two

to acquit, to let go unpunished, and not to make desolate, to cut off or to destroy. That the former is its meaning in Ex. xxxiv. 7, is evident from the explanation which follows, "holding guiltless he will not hold guiltless, visiting the iniquity of the fathers," &c.; visiting the fathers' iniquity proves that it is not held guiltless or suffered to go unpunished. The verb נקה, means to be free, or to count one free, from pollution, crime, guilt, or punishment. To let free from punishment, is the idea most suitable here; God would chastise them in some measure, and would not suffer them to be wholly unpunished.—*Ed.*

years, though they had been warned by the Prophets that they were to bear the scourge of God for seventy years.

This is the reason why the Prophet speaks here of the grievousness of evils, not because the Israelites were insensible, but because they had been credulous, and were still hoping for a return, so that they deceived themselves with false comfort. He therefore says, that the *breaking* was *grievous;* some give this rendering, "Unhealable, or hopeless, is thy bruising." But אנוש, *anush*, is here a substantive, for it is followed by the preposition ל, *lamed;* nor can what the Prophet says be rendered otherwise than in this manner, "Grievousness is to thy bruising," or breaking. He afterwards adds that the *wound* was *grievous*, that is, difficult to be healed; for so I understand the passage.[1] But the end was to be hoped for; yet the people were not to think it near at hand; they were, on the contrary, to prepare themselves for patient waiting until the end prescribed by God had come. It follows,—

13. *There is* none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines.

13. Nemo judicans (*hoc est*, nemo est qui judicet) judicium tuum (*hoc est*, qui suscipiat causam tuam;) ad sanitatem medelæ et curatio non sunt tibi (*alii vertunt*, Nemo judicans judicium tuum, ut emplastrum adhibeat; *sed hoc durius; deinde*, medela et curatio non sunt tibi; *sed videtur mihi simplex esse verborum sensus, quod* nemo judicet judicium, *deinde quod* nihil ad curationem remedii suppetat.)

The Prophet speaks first without a figure, then he illustrates the simple truth by a metaphor. He says that there was *no one to undertake the cause* of the people; as though he had said, that they were destitute of every aid. This was, indeed, in a measure already evident; but so supine was the security of the people, that they daily formed for

[1] The ל in Hebrew is sometimes the κατὰ in Greek; it means, as to, with regard to; so here,—

Incurable as to thy bruise,
Grievous *has been* thy stroke.

Or we may give this rendering, inverting the order,—

As to thy bruise, *it is* incurable;
Grievous *has been* thy stroke.

The "bruise" occasioned by the "grievous stroke" was incurable, that is, by human means. The effect is mentioned first, "the bruise;" then the cause, "the stroke." On אנוש, see vol. ii., note in p. 354.—*Ed.*

themselves some new hopes. Then Jeremiah declared what had already in part happened and was still impending; and thus he proved the folly of the people, who still flattered themselves while they were involved in evils almost without a remedy. "Thou seest," he says, "that there is no one to stretch forth a hand to thee, or who is ready to help thee; and yet thou thinkest that thou wilt soon be free: whence is this vain expectation?" He then comes to a metaphor, *There is no one to apply medicine for thy healing.* In one sentence he includes the whole first chapter of Isaiah, who handles the subject, but explains more fully his meaning. There is, however, nothing obscure when the Prophet says that there was no one to heal the evils of the people.[1]

We must ever bear in mind his object, that is, that the people were too easily deceived, when they hoped to return shortly to their own country. But we may hence gather a general truth,—that men never understand the favour of God until they are subdued by many and severe reproofs: for they always shun God's judgment, and then they become blind to their own sins, and foolishly flatter themselves. And, further, when they only in words confess that they have sinned, they think that they have done abundantly enough. They ought therefore to be urged to the practice and duty of repentance. It afterwards follows—

14. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not: for I have

14. Omnes amici tui obliti sunt tui, et non requirunt; quia plaga

[1] According to *Calvin*, the verse reads thus,—

No one undertakes thy cause;
For a cure, medicines and healing thou hast not.

This division is made by the *Sept.*, though not by the other versions, nor the *Targ.* *Venema* adopts it. The word מְזוֹר, rendered above "cure," means evidently a wound. It only occurs here, and Obad., ver. 7, and twice in Hos. v. 13, where it is rendered "wound." It comes from זוּר, in the sense of compressing or binding up; but the noun taken passively, signifies what is compressed or bound up, and that is a wound. Then the literal rendering would be,—

None *is* pleading thy cause;
As to the wound, medicatives, binding up, none to thee;
or in other words,—
As to the wound, thou hast no medicatives, no binding up.

The word רְפֻאוֹת means medicatives or medicaments, rather than medicines, as it designates here, and in most places, outward applications to wounds and bruises. The order, as in the foregoing verse, is reversed, the medicaments are put before the binding up. See Ezek. xxx. 21.—*Ed.*

wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; *because* thy sins were increased.

tibi (*hoc est* percussi te) castigatione crudelis (hominis, *aut*, sævi,) propter multitudinem iniquitatum tuarum, invaluerunt scelera tua.

The Prophet again repeats, that nothing remained for Israel as coming from men, for no one offered to bring help. Some, indeed, explain the words as though the Prophet had said, that friends, as it is usually the case, concealed themselves through shame on seeing the condition of the people hopeless: for as long as friends can relieve the sick, they are ready at hand, and anxiously exert themselves, but when life is despaired of, they no longer appear. But the Prophet, I have no doubt, condemns here the Jews for the false confidence with which they had been long fascinated; for we know, that at one time they placed hope in the Egyptians; at another in the Assyrians; and thus it happened that they brought on themselves many calamities. And we have seen elsewhere, in many passages, that these confederacies are compared to impure lusts; for when the people sought at one time the friendship of the Egyptians, at another, that of the Assyrians, it was a kind of adultery. God had taken the Jews under his care and protection; but unbelief led them astray, so that they sought to strengthen themselves by the aid of others. Hence, everywhere in the Prophets the Egyptians and the Assyrians are compared to lovers. And this view will suit well here; for it was not enough to point out the miseries of the people, without making known the cause of them.

Then the Prophet refers to those false counsels which the Jews had adopted, when they thought themselves secure and safe while the Egyptians, or the Assyrians, or the Chaldeans were favourable to them. For this reason he says, that all their *friends* had *forgotten* them, and also that they did not *inquire* for them, that is, that they had cast off every care for them. And he adds the reason, because God had *smitten* the people *with an hostile wound*. Here the Prophet summons them again to God's tribunal, that they might learn to consider that these evils did not happen by chance, but that they were the testimonies of God's just wrath. God

then comes forth here, and declares himself the author of all those calamities; for the Prophet would have spoken to no purpose of the miseries of the people, had not this truth been thoroughly impressed on their minds,—that they had to do with God.

Now, that God calls himself an *enemy*, and compares himself to a *cruel enemy*, must not be so understood as that the covenant had been abolished by which he had adopted the children of Abraham as his own; for he, through his mercy, always reserved some remnants. Nor ought we to understand that there was excess in God's severity, as though he raged cruelly against his people, when he executed his judgments: but this ought to be understood according to the common perceptions of men. God also calls elsewhere the Israelites his enemies, but not without lamentation, "Alas!" he says, "I will take vengeance on my enemies." (Isa. i. 24.) He assumed there the character of one grieving, as though he had said, that he unwillingly proceeded to so much rigour, for he would have willingly spared the people, had not necessity forced him to such severity. But, as I have already said, when God calls himself the enemy of his people, it ought to be understood of temporal punishment, or it ought to be explained of the reprobate and lost, who had wholly alienated themselves from God's favour, and whom God had also cut off from the body of his Church as putrid members. But as the Prophet here addresses the faithful, there is no doubt but that God calls himself an enemy, because, according to the state of things at that time, the Jews could not have otherwise thought than that God was angry with them.

With regard to *cruel one*, we have already said, that excess is thereby denoted, as though too much rigour or severity were ascribed to God: but the Jews could not have been otherwise awakened to consider their sins, nor be sufficiently terrified so as to be led seriously to acknowledge the judgment of God. And God himself, in what follows, sufficiently proves, that though he compares himself to a severe or cruel man, yet nothing wrong could be found in his judgments.

For he adds, *for the multitude of thine iniquity, because thy*

sins have prevailed. Though the Jews thought that God acted severely, when he threatened them with long exile, here their mouth was closed by the *multitude* of their *iniquity;* as though he had said, "Set in a balance on one side, the weight of the punishment of which ye complain, and on the other side the heap of sins by which ye have often, and for a long time, provoked my wrath against you." God then, by *multitude of iniquity*, shews that it could not be ascribed to him as a fault that he so severely punished the Jews, because they deserved to be so punished. And he confirms the same thing in other words, not that there was anything ambiguous in what he had said, but because the Prophet saw that he had to do with perverse men. That he might then reprove their indifference, he says, that their *sins had grown strong.*[1] It follows—

15. Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow *is* incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: *because* thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.

15. Quid vociferaris propter confractionem tuam? æger est (*vel*, gravis) dolor tuus propter multitudinem iniquitatis tuæ, quoniam invaluerunt scelera tua, feci hæc tibi.

The Prophet now anticipates an objection, lest the Jews should expostulate with God; for it sufficiently appears that they always complained of God's extreme severity, when they indulged themselves in their vices. As soon then as God treated them as they deserved, they became exasperated and

[1] It is better to retain the literal word "lovers," than "friends," as rendered by the *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Targ.*, though not by the *Vulg.* The particle לְ is commonly a preposition, but not when preceding a verb, as here; and that רב is a verb here is proved by the sentence which follows, which is in apposition; and it is so rendered by *Blayney*. The verse may be thus rendered—

14. All thy lovers have forgotten thee,
Thee they seek not:
Verily with the stroke of an enemy have I struck thee,—
With a violent correction;
Because multiplied had thine iniquity,
Grown strong had thy sins, &c.

The word for "violent," or cruel, is so construed in the early versions; the *Targ.* alone countenances our version. The last line conveys a different idea from the preceding. The verb, indeed, means strong in number as well as strong in power; but as number is expressed in the previous line, we may justly consider that power is meant here: their sins were not only many, but strong and vigorous, so strong as to resist all exhortations and all threatenings.—*Ed.*

enraged against him. Hence the Prophet now meets their perverse and unjust complaints, and asks, why they *cried out for their bruising,* as though he had said, that these clamours were much too late, when they had passed by the season for repentance. For God had suspended his extreme threatenings until the people had betrayed so much obstinacy, that there was no room for mercy. When, therefore, the people's wickedness had become unhealable, the Prophet, as we have seen, proclaimed their exile.

Now, indeed, he derides their late crying, for they had been too long torpid in their contempt of God: *Why,* then, *dost thou cry for thy bruising? grievous is thy sorrow,* or, grievousness is to thy sorrow;[1] but *for the multitude of thine iniquity, and because thy sins have grown strong, have I done these things to thee.* Here God frees himself from the calumnies of the people, and shews that those who murmured or made a clamour, acted unjustly, having not considered what they merited: for they were worthy of the heaviest punishment, because they not only in one way brought ruin on themselves, and more and more kindled God's vengeance, but had also for many years hardened themselves in their sins; and they had, besides, given themselves up, in various ways, to every kind of wickedness, so that the Prophet justly upbraided them with a *multitude of iniquity,* and also with a mass of *sins.* God then says, that he had not exceeded the limits of moderation in the punishment he inflicted on the people, because their desperate wickedness and perverseness compelled him. But consolation is immediately subjoined,—

16. Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall

16. Propterea omnes qui devorant te devorabuntur, et omnes hostes tui, omnes, inquam, in captivitatem

[1] Rather "sore," or wound. The word מַכְאֹב indeed means sometimes the soreness or wound of the mind, that is, sorrow or grief; but here, no doubt, it retains its primary idea, correspondently with stroke, bruise, and wound. The *Targ.* retains this meaning, while the versions go all astray. Then it is, "Miserable is thy sore." The rest of the verse is as follows,—

Because multiplied had thine iniquity,
Grown strong had thy sins,
Have I done these things to thee.—*Ed.*

go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.

ibunt; et erunt qui te diripiunt in direptionem, et omnes qui te prædantur erunt in prædam.

Here, again, the Prophet promises that God would be gracious to his people, but after a long time, when that perverseness would be subdued, which could not be soon cured. We ought, then, ever to bear in mind the difference between the promise of favours, of which Jeremiah was a witness and a herald, and those vain boastings, by which the false prophets deceived the people, when they encouraged them to expect a return in a short time, and said that the term of deliverance was at hand.

And this difference ought to be noticed on this account, because a most useful doctrine may hence be gathered: the unprincipled men who basely pretend God's name, have this in common with his true and faithful servants,—that they both hold forth the favour of God: but those who falsely use God's name bury the doctrine of repentance; for they seek only to soothe people with flatteries: and as they hunt for favour, they wholly omit the doctrine that may offend, and is in no way sweet and pleasant to the flesh. Jeremiah did not, indeed, deal so severely with the people, but that he gave them some hope of pardon, and always mitigated whatever severity there was in the doctrine of repentance: but at the same time he did not, by indulgence, cherish the vices of the people, as was wont to be done by the false prophets. But what did these do? they boasted that God was merciful, slow to wrath, and ready to be reconciled to sinners: hence they concluded that exile would not be long; and at the same time, as we have said, they perfidiously flattered the people. So then, it ought to be borne in mind, that we are not fit to receive the favour of God, nor are capable of it, so to speak, until all the pride of the flesh be really subdued, and also all self-security be corrected and removed.

We now see why the Prophet subjoined the promise of favour, after having spoken of the dreadful judgment of God. But the illative, לכן, *laken*, does not seem suitable; for how can this verse be connected with the threatenings which

we have noticed? *Therefore they who devour thee shall be devoured.* But *therefore* refers to what he had before said.[1] It is not then strange, that he draws the inference, —that God having taken vengeance on the wickedness of the people, would also execute vengeance on their enemies. Then the illative is not unsuitable, because the time of mercy had arrived when the Jews became subdued, so as to humble themselves before God and to repent of their sins.

But there is here a common doctrine which we meet with everywhere in the Prophets, even that God, after having made a beginning with his Church, becomes then a judge of all nations; for if he by no means spares his elect, his own family, how can he leave aliens unpunished? And it is the perpetual consolation of the Church, that though God employs the wicked as scourges to chastise his people, yet their condition is not better, for when they have triumphed for a moment, God will soon bring them to judgment. There is, therefore, no reason why the faithful should envy their enemies when they are chastened by God's hand, and when their enemies exult in their pleasures; for their prosperity will soon come to an end, and with the same measure will God mete unto them the reward of the wrong done to his people.

Whosoever, then, *devours thee shall be devoured, and all thine enemies, yea, all, shall go into* captivity; and, lastly, *they who plunder thee*, &c., which is rendered by some, "they who tread thee shall be for treading." But as the verb means plundering, to avoid repetition, I prefer the former meaning: "*They*, then, *who spoil thee shall become a spoil*, and *they who plunder thee shall be for plunder.* The reason follows,—

[1] What seems to be his meaning is, that as God had punished his people, *therefore* he would punish the nations. The versions and the *Targ.* render it "therefore;" but *Lowth* gives "yet surely;" and *Blayney*, "afterwards." But we may render it "therefore," or for this reason, as anticipative of what is contained at the end of the next verse, "Because an outcast have they called thee, Sion, whom no one seeks." *Venema*, apprehending this to be the sense of the passage, supposed that the two verses have been transposed: but this kind of construction is not unfrequent in Scripture. —*Ed.*

17. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an Outcast, *saying*, this *is* Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

17. Quia adducam sanationem tibi, et à doloribus tuis sanabo te, dicit Jehova; quoniam expulsam vocarunt te Sion, quam nemo requirit.

When God promised favour to the Jews, he referred to their enemies; for it would have been a grievous temptation, which would have otherwise not only disturbed and depressed their minds, but also extinguished all faith, to see their enemies enjoying all they could wish, and successful in everything they attempted, had not this consolation been granted them,—that their enemies would have at length to render an account for the wickedness in which they gloried. But now the main thing is here expressed,—that God, when reconciled to his people, would heal the wounds which he had inflicted; for he who inflicts wounds on us, can alone heal us. He exercises judgment in punishing, he afterwards undertakes the office of a Physician, to deliver us from our evils. It is, therefore, the same as though the Prophet had said, "When the right time shall pass away, which God has fixed as to his people, deliverance is to be hoped for with certainty; for the Lord has decreed to punish his people only for a time, and not wholly to destroy them."

I will bring thee, he says, *healing, and will heal thee of thy wounds.* And this admonition was very necessary, for the Jews had nearly rotted in their exile when God delivered them. They might have then been a hundred times overwhelmed with despair; but God bids them here to raise upwards their minds, so as to expect help from heaven, for there was none on earth. And he adds, *because they called thee, Zion, an outcast whom no one seeketh;* that is, of whom, or of whose welfare, no one is solicitous. He confirms what I have before said,—that the extreme evils of the people would be no hinderance when God came to deliver them, but, on the contrary, be the future occasion of favour and mercy. When, therefore, the people should become so sunk in misery as to make all to think their deliverance hopeless, God promises that he would then be their Redeemer. And this is what we ought carefully to notice: for we look around us here and there, whenever we hope for any help; but God

shews that he will be then especially propitious to us, when we are in a hopeless state according to the common opinion of men. It follows,—

18. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

18. Sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego reducens captivitatem tabernaculorum Jacob et habitaculorum ejus miserabor; et adificabitur urbs super excelsum suum (*vel*, super acervum suum; *vel*, culmen,) et palatium in sua statione (*vel*, regula,) sedebit.

Jeremiah goes on with the same subject, and dwells on it more at large; for as it was difficult to lead the people seriously to repent, so it was difficult to raise up desponding minds after they had been subjected to a multitude of calamities. God then declares here again that he would come to restore his people from captivity.

Behold, he says, *I restore*, &c., as though he was already prepared with an outstretched hand to liberate his people. Let it be noticed, that the Prophet did not in vain represent God as present; but he, no doubt, had regard to the want of faith in the people, and sought to remove this defect. Since then the Jews thought themselves wholly forsaken, the Prophet testifies that God would be present with them, and he introduces him as speaking, *Behold, I restore*, &c., as though he was already the liberator of the people. He names the restoration of *tents* and *habitations*, because they had been long sojourners in Chaldea and other countries, where they had been scattered. As then they had their own dwellings, the Prophet reminds them that they were yet but strangers among the nations, for God would restore them to their own country, which was their real dwelling-place. This is the reason why he speaks of tents and habitations. He, at the same time, points out the cause of their redemption, even mercy, so that the Jews might at length learn to flee to this their sole asylum, and know that there was no other remedy for their calamities than this,—that God should look on them according to his mercy, for he might have justly destroyed them altogether. In short, the Prophet reminds them that they must have perished for ever, had not God at length shewed mercy to them.

He mentions a fuller display of his favour,—that he would again *build* Jerusalem *upon its own heap*, or hill, as some render it; for the situation of the city was high, and towered above other parts of Judea. But it seems to me that the Prophet means that the city would be built on its own foundations, for he calls here the ruins heaps, or piles. For the city had been destroyed in such a manner, that yet some ruins remained, and some vestiges of the walls. It is then the same as though he had said, that the city, however splendid and wealthy in former times, would yet be so restored, that its dignity would not be less than before. But he speaks of its extent when he says, that it would be *built upon its heaps*, that is, on its ancient foundations.

And this point is confirmed by what immediately follows, *the palace shall be set in its own form* or station, על משפטו, *al meshephthu*. The word שפט, *shepheth*, properly means judgment, but it means also form, measure, manner, custom. Here, no doubt, the Prophet means that the king's palace would be equally splendid to what it had been, and in the same place. Some think that ארמון, *armun*, means the Temple; and this sense I do not reject; but as the Hebrews for the most part understand by this term a splendid, large, or high building, I prefer the former sense, that is, that he speaks of the royal palace: *stand* then *will* the king's *palace in its own form*, or place, as though it had never been destroyed.[1] In short, he promises such a restoration of the city and kingdom, that no less favour from God was to be expected in the second state of the Church, than it had for-

[1] The versions and the *Targ.* render the word for "palace," temple; and as the former clause has "on its heap," or, on its ruins, so in this the same preposition is used, and seems to require a similar construction, "on its former spot," or, on its wonted place. The word משפט denotes what is customary or usual, as well as what is right and just. Then the two lines would read thus,—

And built shall be the city on its ruins,
And the palace on its wonted seat shall be fixed, (or shall stand.)

But the versions and the *Targ.* vary the meaning of the preposition. The *Vulg.*, with which the rest essentially agree, is, "And the temple, according to its order, shall be founded." *Blayney* renders the line thus,—

And the palace shall be established upon its (former) plan.

As in the previous line, the place is designated, it is probable that the place also is meant here.—*Ed.*

merly; for God would obliterate all memory of calamities when the Church again flourished, and the kingdom became so eminent in wealth, honour, power, and other excellencies, that it would evidently appear that God had only for a time been displeased with his Church.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are so slow to consider thy judgments, and become continually hardened in our sins,—O grant, that being really touched by those many warnings by which thou not only invitest, but also stimulatest us to repent, we may learn to humble ourselves, and so submit to thy chastisements, that we may be capable of receiving that mercy which turns whatever evil may happen to us to our good and salvation, until we shall at length be gathered into that blessed rest which is prepared for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixteenth.

19. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.

19. Et egredietur ab ipsis laus et vox lætitiarum; et augebo eos, et non minuentur; et decorabo eos, nec attenuabuntur.

The Prophet confirms what he had said. We have stated that the Jews, while any hope remained for them, were perverse towards God, but that, after they were brought to extremities, they became extremely dejected; for they lost all hope as to their state, and became so desponding that they would receive no consolation. It was not therefore enough, slightly, or in a few words, to promise them restoration; it was necessary that the promise should be repeatedly confirmed. This then is now the subject of the Prophet; he promises that *praise and the voice of joy* would proceed from them.

We ought to notice here the contrast between sighings, groanings, complaints, lamentations, and giving of thanks; for as long as they were detained in exile, no praise could have been heard among them. Sorrow is, indeed, no hinderance to prevent us to bless God in extreme misery; but we cannot with a full mouth, so to speak, bless God, except

when some cause of joy is presented to us. Hence is that saying of James, "Is any joyful among you? let him sing." (James v. 13.) As then the Prophet speaks of thanksgiving, he intimates that God's favour would be so great as to remove every sorrow and sadness from the Jews. But he indirectly exhorts the faithful to celebrate God's kindness. Had he only said, "Go forth from them shall the voice of joy," it would, indeed, have been a complete sentence; but it was also necessary to remind the faithful for what end God would deal so kindly with his people, even that they might proclaim his goodness; for this is the design for which we receive every good from God's hand. Thanksgiving is then usually connected with joy, when mention is made of the Church.

But we have said that the faithful cannot with so much alacrity praise God, when they are pressed down by distresses, as when God makes their hearts to rejoice; for grief holds bound all the feelings of men; but joy, proceeding from a perception of God's paternal favour, dilates as it were their souls; and hence also their tongues are set loose. For this reason it is said in Ps. li. 15, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." David there intimates that he had been for a time silent; when God hid from him his face, he could not taste of his paternal goodness. During that time David had his heart as it were bound and his mouth closed; but he prays the Lord to open his mouth, that is, to grant him joy that he might give him thanks.

We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet: he intimates, that though the Jews would be in sorrow for a time, would groan and mourn, yet this condition would not be perpetual; for God would at length comfort them, so that they would not only rejoice, but also proclaim his mercy when liberated.

He adds, *I will increase them, and they shall not be lessened; I will adorn them,* &c. Some render this also, "I will increase them:" but the words are different; and כבד, *cebed,* means sometimes to increase, and sometimes to adorn, to glorify, to honour. The words which follow are also dif-

ferent, מעט, *moth*, and צער, *tsor*. And though the Prophet meant to repeat nearly the same thing, yet there is no doubt but that he intended to set forth the favour of God by this variety, as though he had said, that so remarkable would be the mercy of God, that the Jews would acknowledge, that what had been promised to their father Abraham had been fulfilled to them, "Thy seed shall be as the sand of the sea, and as the stars of heaven." (Gen. xxii. 17.) The perpetuity also, or the continuity of his favour is denoted, when he says, they shall not be *lessened*, they shall not be *made small*. It is possible for a people to increase for a short time; but such a thing is often of no long duration, for the form of this world passeth away. God then promises stability and perpetuity to his Church, for he would manifest his favour to it from day to day, and from year to year.[1] This is the meaning. It follows—

20. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them.

20. Et erunt filii ejus sicut ab initio, et cœtus ejus coram facie mea stabilietur (*vel*, dirigetur, *nam* כן utrumque significat,) et visitabo super omnes oppressores ejus.

This abundance of words which the Prophet employs is by no means useless; for we ought always to remember how hard were their temptations when no token of God's favour appeared for seventy years. It was hence necessary to sustain minds overwhelmed with evils by many supports, so that they might not wholly faint; and he adds promises to promises, that the Jews might see as it were a spark of light from the deep abyss. And hence, also, we may gather a useful admonition: Though the Lord may favour us to-day, so that we are not exercised by very grievous trials, yet every one knows by his own experience, how prone we are to despond; and then when we once begin to faint, how difficult

[1] The meaning of the latter verbs in these clauses is to be ascertained by the preceding verbs: "I will multiply," or increase "them;" then the opposite to this is, "and they shall not be lessened," or decreased: and when it is said, "I will glorify," or honour "them," the corresponding contrast to this is, "they shall not be degraded," or dishonoured. The first clause refers to number, and the second to honour, dignity, or renown. Then the right version would be as follows,—

And I will multiply them, and they shall not be lessened,
I will also honour them, and they shall not be degraded.—*Ed.*

it is to be raised up to the confidence of hope. Let us then learn to join promises to promises, so that if one will not suffice, another may.

He now says that their *children* would *be as from the beginning.* Some give this refined explanation, that the children of the Church would be as from the beginning, that is, before the Law; for the covenant of grace was made by God with Abraham before the Law was proclaimed: they hence think that the abrogation of the Law is here denoted, as though he had said, that the Church would be free when Christ came, and that the servile yoke of the Law would then be removed. But this kind of refinement I cannot approve; for I do not think that such a notion ever entered into the mind of the Prophet. I have then no doubt but that the reference here is to the kingdom of David, as though the Prophet had said, that the state of the Church would be no less prosperous and happy under Christ than formerly under David. Were any one to object and say, that Christ's kingdom is much more happy than that of David: this I grant; but the prophets ever compare the kingdom of Christ with the kingdom of David, and they were content with this way of teaching, as it exceeded the hope of the people; for the Jews thought it not credible that they could ever attain their ancient renown. When, therefore, he says here, that the children of Judah would be as *at the* beginning, there is no doubt with me but that he had a regard to that promise, which declares that the seed of David would be for ever on his throne, as long as the sun and moon shone in the heavens. (Ps. lxxxix. 37.)

The meaning is, that though the kingdom would through a dreadful ruin become extinct, together with all its dignity, the Jews would yet, through Christ, recover what they had lost through their sins, ingratitude, and perverseness.

He afterwards adds, *His seed shall be established before my face, and I will visit all his oppressors.* Here again God confirms the promise concerning the perpetuity of his Church. He therefore says that the *assembly of the people would be established before him,*[1] by which words he bids the Jews to

[1] It would be better to observe the order of the original, "And his as-

look upwards, for in the world nothing was to be found but despair. God then calls the attention of the Jews to himself, when he says that the Church would be established before his face. And as the power of enemies was so great, that the faithful might justly object and say, that every avenue was closed up against God's favour, he adds, that God on the other hand had sufficient power to destroy and to reduce to nothing all their enemies; and he mentions *all*, because the Chaldean monarchy was widely extended and consisted of many nations; and there was no part of it which was not most hostile to the Jews. As, then, the miserable exiles saw that not only the Chaldeans were inimical to them, but also other nations, so that they were hated almost by the whole world, God here comes to their aid, and declares that he had power enough to destroy *all* their enemies.

A useful doctrine may be hence deduced: The Church was in such a manner perpetual, that its condition was yet variable; for it often seemed good to God to break off the course of his favour before the coming of Christ. What then happened we may accommodate to our own time. As, then, the Prophet says here, that the children of the Church would *be as at the beginning*, we need not wonder when the Church happens at any time to be scattered, as indeed the case was under the Papacy. For the Church was not only dead, but also buried, and was not only as a putrid carcase, but like the dust it had wholly vanished; for what remnants could have been found fifty years ago? We hence see that what happened under the Law has also taken place under the kingdom of Christ; for the Church has sometimes been overwhelmed with troubles, and has been hid without any glory or beauty. But, in the meantime, we embrace this promise, that the children of the godly shall be as formerly; for as the kingdom of Christ in former times flourished, so we ought to feel assured that there is sufficient power in God to

sembling before me shall be confirmed," or according to the *Vulg.* and *Syr.*, "shall continue." The reference is to the assembling at the stated festivals. The verb means to be confirmed, to be fixed, to be made certain; so that "continue" conveys the right idea: the assembling was to be made fixed, so as to become permanent; and it is said to be before God, in order to distinguish it from any other kind of assembling.—*Ed.*

restore to the Church its glory, so that Christ's kingdom may again rise up, and all God's blessings shine forth in it. But as many enemies surround the Church on every side, and the Devil ever excites everywhere commotions and disturbances, let us know that there is another clause added, even that God will be the defender of his people; so that how much soever the whole world may attempt to tread under foot his favour, he will yet not suffer them to accomplish their fury; for he has the power not only to restrain their assaults, but also wholly to destroy them and to obliterate their memory; for this is what is implied in the word *visiting*. It then follows—

21. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who *is* this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.

21. Et erit fortis ejus (*vel*, magnificus) ab ipso, et dominator ejus e medio ejus exibit, et appropinquare eum faciam, et accedet ad me; nam (*vel*, certe) quisnam hic qui applicet, (*vel*, qui adaptet) cor suum ut accedat ad me? (*alii vertunt*, qui alliciat cor suum; *dicemus postea de sensu*,) dicit Jehova.

The Prophet, no doubt, explains here more at large what he had said of the restoration of the Church; for we know that the Jews had been so taught, that they were to place their whole confidence as to their salvation on David, that is, on the king whom God had set over them. Then the happiness and safety of the Church was always founded on the king; he being taken away, it was all over with the Church, as the Anointed is said to be the Lord, in whose spirit is our spirit. (Lam. iv. 20.) Hence God has even from the beginning directed the attention of his people to their king, that they might depend on him, not that David was able by his own power to save the people, but because he typically personated Christ. We have not now an earthly king who is Christ's image; but it is Christ alone who vivifies the Church. But it was at that time set forth figuratively, that the king was, as it were, the soul of the community; and we have before seen, that when the Prophet animated the Jews with hope, he set before them David, and afterwards the Son of David.

For the same reason, he says here, *His valiant one*, or, illustrious one, *shall be from himself*. For we must remember

the condition of that miserable and calamitous time when God took away every source of joy, by depriving the people of all the dignity with which they had been honoured. It was the same then as though Jeremiah had promised the Jews a resurrection, for they were in their exile as dead men, as their hope of public safety had vanished when their king was destroyed. Here, then, he bids them to entertain good hope, because the Lord was able to raise them from death to life. And doubtless it was a wonderful resurrection when the Jews returned to their own country, a way having been opened for them; for they had been driven away, as it were, into another world. And who could have ever thought that so many obstacles could have been removed, when the Chaldeans extended their dominion even over Judea? The miserable exiles had certainly no refuge. It was not then to no purpose that Jeremiah testifies here, that the *strong* or valiant, that is, the king, would be from the people, and that there would come forth a *Ruler* from the midst of them. To come or go forth does not mean here to depart, as though the king would go elsewhere; but to go forth signifies here to proceed: *Go forth* then, or proceed, *shall a Ruler from the midst* of the people: how this took place it is well known.

But Isaiah had foretold what his successor here confirms, saying, "Come forth shall a shoot from the root (or stem) of Jesse, and a rod shall spring up from the root of his tree." (Is. xi. 1.) He calls it there the house of Jesse, which was a private house: he would have dignified the favour with a more glorious name, had he mentioned David; but as there was then no kingdom, he refers to Jesse; for as David came forth as an unknown rustic from the folds of the sheep, so also the Lord would raise up a shoot from the stem of a tree that had been cut down. We hence see in what sense Jeremiah uses the expression, "Come forth;" for Christ rose up beyond the expectation of men, and rose up as a shoot when a tree is cut down, that is, when there was no resemblance of majesty among the people.

He afterwards adds, *I will cause him to draw near, and he will come to me.* This may be either confined to the head or extended to the whole body; and the second idea is what

I mostly approve; for the people were a long time removed from the presence of God, even as long as they were exiled from their country. Hence God adds, "I will cause them again to draw nigh, and they shall come to me." If, however, any one prefers to explain this of the head, or of the king himself, I offer no objection.

Now, we are taught from this passage, that whenever God speaks of the restoration of the Church, he ever declares that he will be entreated by us; in short, that whenever he invites us to the hope of favour and salvation, we ought always to look to Christ; for except we direct all our thoughts to him, all the promises will vanish away, for they cannot be valid except through him; because in Christ only, as Paul says, they are yea and amen. (2 Cor. i. 19, 20.) But as this truth often occurs in the Prophets, it is enough here to touch on it by the way, as I have handled it more fully elsewhere.

As to the latter part of the verse, there is some ambiguity,—*for who is he, this*, &c. There are two demonstrative pronouns, הוּא זֶה, *hua, ze*. Afterwards comes עֵרֶב, *oreb*, *fitting* his heart. The verb עָרַב, *oreb*, means to be a surety, and also to fit, to adapt, to accommodate, or to form, and sometimes to render sweet or pleasant; and on this account some have thus translated, "Who will allure his heart?" He then adds, *that he may come to me, saith Jehovah?* I have said that this passage is obscure, and it has hence been turned into various meanings by interpreters. Some apply the words to Christ, that he alone has of his own accord come to the Father. Others consider a negative to be understood, as though it was said, that no one prepares his heart to come to God. But there are some who regard the passage as an exhortation, "Who is he who will apply his heart that he may come to me?" Now, if we read it as expressing astonishment or wonder, it would be, in my view, its real meaning. I am not aware that any one has mentioned this; but the Prophet, I have no doubt, intended his words to be so understood.

He said before, "I will cause him to draw nigh, that he may come to me." I have already explained this of the people, who had been long rejected. God then promises

here a gathering, as though he had said, "For a time I scattered the people here and there like chaff; I will now gather them again together, and they shall be under my care and protection as formerly." Having said this, he now touches on the ingratitude of the people by this question, "Who is there who comes to me? who will frame his heart that he may be reconciled to me?" It is, then, an expression of wonder, intended to make the Jews know that their hardness and insensibility are condemned; for when God kindly invited them, they rejected his favour, when he sought to embrace them, they fled far off from him.

But an objection may be here made, "Why then did God promise that he would cause the Jews to come to him?" To this I answer, that God performs or fulfils this promise in various ways: he might have called the Jews to himself by an outward invitation, as he did when the liberty of returning was given them: and then, indeed, a few of the Jews accepted his favour; but all the Israelites, already habituated to the pleasures and enjoyments of those countries, regarded as nothing what God had promised. Thus very few returned to their own country, and restoration was despised by them, though they had once been very anxious about it. God, however, even then made the people to draw nigh; for he stretched forth his hand as though he would gather them and cherish them under his wings. But as the greatest part despised his invaluable favour, God here justly complains of so great an impiety, and exclaims as through wonder or astonishment, *Who is he who will form his heart, that he may come to me?*

Had it been simply said, "Who is he who comes to me?" the meaning, through brevity, would have been obscure. But God here clearly distinguishes between the two kinds of access: the first was, when liberty was given to the people, by the decree of Cyrus, and a permission given to build the city and the temple. God, therefore, caused them then to draw nigh that they might come to him; this was the first access. But he now adds, that the Jews did not form or prepare their heart. He indeed speaks of future time, but yet he charges them with ingratitude, which afterwards was fully manifested. Hence he says, "Who is this, that he may come to

me?" that is, "I will contrive means that they may unite again in one body, call on me and enjoy their inheritance: this will I do that they may come to me; but many will still live in their own dregs, and prefer Chaldea and other countries to the temple and religion. Many, then, will be they who will not form their heart to come to me."

We now understand the meaning of the Prophet. But we must at the same time bear in mind, that by saying above, "I will cause him to draw near that he may come to me," God does not speak of the hidden working of his Spirit; for it is in his power, as we shall presently remark, to draw the hearts of men to himself whenever he pleases. But when he said, *I will cause him to draw nigh*, &c., he spoke only of an outward restoration; and now he adds a complaint, that the Jews would wickedly repudiate this favour, for no one would prepare his heart. We yet see that the whole fault is cast on the Jews, that they were to be deprived of their own country: for it was owing to nothing on God's part that they were not restored, but to themselves, because they were devoted to their own pleasure, and regarded their return and to be counted God's people as nothing. It was therefore the object of the Prophet to ascribe to the Jews the whole fault that God's favour would not come to them, or that it would not be effectual as to the greatest part of them, even because they would not prepare or form their heart, that they might come to God, in order that they might be partakers of that invaluable privilege offered to them.

Now, the Papists lay hold on this passage to prove that there is a free-will in man to come to God; but to do so is indeed very absurd. For whenever God condemns the hardness of the people, he doubtless does not argue the question, what power there is in men, whether they can turn to do what is good, whether they can guide their own hearts. To hold this would be extremely foolish. When it is said in Psalm xcv. 8, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as your fathers in the wilderness," shall we say that as they hardened their hearts they were capable of turning, so that they could by the power of free-will choose either good or evil? To say this would be puerile and ex-

tremely sottish. We hence see that the Papists are unworthy of being reasoned with, when they seek to prove free-will by such arguments. They would, indeed, adduce something plausible were their exposition adopted; for they render the words thus, "Who is this," &c., as though God praised the promptitude of the faithful, who willingly offer themselves and prepare their hearts. But opposed to this view is the whole context. It hence appears that it was very far from the Prophet's design to represent God as commending the obedience of the godly; but, on the contrary, he exclaims with wonder, as Isaiah does when he says, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isa. liii. 1.) He surely does not set forth the obedience of the faithful in receiving promptly and gladly the Gospel; but, on the contrary, (as though something monstrous terrified him,) that the world would not believe the Gospel, when yet it offered to them salvation and eternal life. So also in this place, *Who is he?* &c. For what could have been more desirable than that God should at length, by outstretched arms, gather the Jews to himself? "I wish you to draw nigh, ye have been for a time, as it were, banished from me, I had driven you to distant lands; but I am now ready to gather you." As, then, God so sweetly and kindly allured them to himself, it was doubtless a most abominable and monstrous ingratitude for them to reject the offer and to turn their backs as it were on God, who so kindly invited them. As, then, the Prophet is here only condemning such insensibility and perverse wickedness in the Jews, there is no reason why we should be in quest of a proof in favour of free-will.[1]

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Many explanations have been given which are wholly inadmissible, having nothing in the context to support them, such as the application of these words to our Saviour. They are evidently connected with the previous clause, being joined with it by "for:" they in a manner explain and qualify that clause, and may be deemed parenthetic, for the former clause and that which follows these words, are connected together,—

We may add, that David uses the same verb in Psalm cxix. 73, 125, when he says, "Cause thy servant to approach thee, that he may learn thy commandments."[1] Some render the words, "Be a surety for thy servant," &c.; for the verb ערב, *oreb*, which is here, is found there also. Therefore the passage might be aptly turned against the Papists, who hold that it is in the power of man to form his own heart. But David testifies that this is peculiarly the office and work of God; for by asking this from him he doubtless confesses that it was not in his own power. It afterwards follows,—

22. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

22. Et eritis mihi in populum, et ego ero vobis in Deum (*quod postea confirmat primo versu capitis*, 31, *cum dicit*, In tempore illo, dicit Jehova, Ero in Deum cunctis cognationibus Israel, et ipsi erunt mihi in populum.)

As this verse and what occurs in the first verse of the next chapter are materially the same, they shall be both explained here. God then says that the Jews would become a *people* to him, and that he would become a *God* to them. This mode of speaking is what we meet with everywhere in the Prophets; and it is very expressive, and includes the whole of true happiness. For when have we life, except when we become the people of God? We ought also to bear in mind that saying of the Psalmist, "Blessed are the people whose God is Jehovah." (Ps. cxliv. 15.) It confirms what I have

And I will bring him nigh that he may come near to me,
(For who is he who pledges his heart
To come near to me, saith Jehovah!)
22. And ye shall be to me a people,
And I will be to you a God.

By "him" we are to understand "Jacob," the subject of the whole passage, and not the "governor," who was to come from "the midst of him," *i.e.*, Jacob, a name by which the whole nation is here called. The promise is to bring Jacob, or the people, nigh; and then to shew that this is alone God's work, the words in the parenthesis are introduced, and by a question, which implies the negative in the strongest manner, as though he had said, "This work, to bring you nigh, is mine alone, for no one among you pledges or engages his heart to come near to me."

Both the *Sept.* and the *Targ.* render "him" in the first line in the plural number, "them," *i.e.*, the people. And the *Syr.*, though the form of the expression is changed, yet gives the *meaning* of the words within the parenthesis, for the work of turning the heart is ascribed to the Lord. —*Ed.*

[1] There is a mistake as to this reference, for the word is only found in verse 122.—*Ed.*

look upwards, for in the world nothing was to be found but despair. God then calls the attention of the Jews to himself, when he says that the Church would be established before his face. And as the power of enemies was so great, that the faithful might justly object and say, that every avenue was closed up against God's favour, he adds, that God on the other hand had sufficient power to destroy and to reduce to nothing all their enemies; and he mentions *all*, because the Chaldean monarchy was widely extended and consisted of many nations; and there was no part of it which was not most hostile to the Jews. As, then, the miserable exiles saw that not only the Chaldeans were inimical to them, but also other nations, so that they were hated almost by the whole world, God here comes to their aid, and declares that he had power enough to destroy *all* their enemies.

A useful doctrine may be hence deduced: The Church was in such a manner perpetual, that its condition was yet variable; for it often seemed good to God to break off the course of his favour before the coming of Christ. What then happened we may accommodate to our own time. As, then, the Prophet says here, that the children of the Church would *be as at the beginning*, we need not wonder when the Church happens at any time to be scattered, as indeed the case was under the Papacy. For the Church was not only dead, but also buried, and was not only as a putrid carcase, but like the dust it had wholly vanished; for what remnants could have been found fifty years ago? We hence see that what happened under the Law has also taken place under the kingdom of Christ; for the Church has sometimes been overwhelmed with troubles, and has been hid without any glory or beauty. But, in the meantime, we embrace this promise, that the children of the godly shall be as formerly; for as the kingdom of Christ in former times flourished, so we ought to feel assured that there is sufficient power in God to

sembling before me shall be confirmed," or according to the *Vulg.* and *Syr.*, "shall continue." The reference is to the assembling at the stated festivals. The verb means to be confirmed, to be fixed, to be made certain; so that "continue" conveys the right idea: the assembling was to be made fixed, so as to become permanent; and it is said to be before God, in order to distinguish it from any other kind of assembling.—*Ed.*

restore to the Church its glory, so that Christ's kingdom may again rise up, and all God's blessings shine forth in it. But as many enemies surround the Church on every side, and the Devil ever excites everywhere commotions and disturbances, let us know that there is another clause added, even that God will be the defender of his people; so that how much soever the whole world may attempt to tread under foot his favour, he will yet not suffer them to accomplish their fury; for he has the power not only to restrain their assaults, but also wholly to destroy them and to obliterate their memory; for this is what is implied in the word *visiting*. It then follows—

21. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who *is* this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.

21. Et erit fortis ejus (*vel*, magnificus) ab ipso, et dominator ejus e medio ejus exibit, et appropinquare eum faciam, et accedet ad me; nam (*vel*, certe) quisnam hic qui applicet, (*vel*, qui adaptet) cor suum ut accedat ad me? (*alii vertunt*, qui alliciat cor suum; *dicemus postea de sensu*,) dicit Jehova.

The Prophet, no doubt, explains here more at large what he had said of the restoration of the Church; for we know that the Jews had been so taught, that they were to place their whole confidence as to their salvation on David, that is, on the king whom God had set over them. Then the happiness and safety of the Church was always founded on the king; he being taken away, it was all over with the Church, as the Anointed is said to be the Lord, in whose spirit is our spirit. (Lam. iv. 20.) Hence God has even from the beginning directed the attention of his people to their king, that they might depend on him, not that David was able by his own power to save the people, but because he typically personated Christ. We have not now an earthly king who is Christ's image; but it is Christ alone who vivifies the Church. But it was at that time set forth figuratively, that the king was, as it were, the soul of the community; and we have before seen, that when the Prophet animated the Jews with hope, he set before them David, and afterwards the Son of David.

For the same reason, he says here, *His valiant one*, or, illustrious one, *shall be from himself*. For we must remember

tremely sottish. We hence see that the Papists are unworthy of being reasoned with, when they seek to prove free-will by such arguments. They would, indeed, adduce something plausible were their exposition adopted; for they render the words thus, "Who is this," &c., as though God praised the promptitude of the faithful, who willingly offer themselves and prepare their hearts. But opposed to this view is the whole context. It hence appears that it was very far from the Prophet's design to represent God as commending the obedience of the godly; but, on the contrary, he exclaims with wonder, as Isaiah does when he says, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isa. liii. 1.) He surely does not set forth the obedience of the faithful in receiving promptly and gladly the Gospel; but, on the contrary, (as though something monstrous terrified him,) that the world would not believe the Gospel, when yet it offered to them salvation and eternal life. So also in this place, *Who is he?* &c. For what could have been more desirable than that God should at length, by outstretched arms, gather the Jews to himself? "I wish you to draw nigh, ye have been for a time, as it were, banished from me, I had driven you to distant lands; but I am now ready to gather you." As, then, God so sweetly and kindly allured them to himself, it was doubtless a most abominable and monstrous ingratitude for them to reject the offer and to turn their backs as it were on God, who so kindly invited them. As, then, the Prophet is here only condemning such insensibility and perverse wickedness in the Jews, there is no reason why we should be in quest of a proof in favour of free-will.[1]

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Many explanations have been given which are wholly inadmissible, having nothing in the context to support them, such as the application of these words to our Saviour. They are evidently connected with the previous clause, being joined with it by "for:" they in a manner explain and qualify that clause, and may be deemed parenthetic, for the former clause and that which follows these words, are connected together,—

I mostly approve; for the people were a long time removed from the presence of God, even as long as they were exiled from their country. Hence God adds, "I will cause them again to draw nigh, and they shall come to me." If, however, any one prefers to explain this of the head, or of the king himself, I offer no objection.

Now, we are taught from this passage, that whenever God speaks of the restoration of the Church, he ever declares that he will be entreated by us; in short, that whenever he invites us to the hope of favour and salvation, we ought always to look to Christ; for except we direct all our thoughts to him, all the promises will vanish away, for they cannot be valid except through him; because in Christ only, as Paul says, they are yea and amen. (2 Cor. i. 19, 20.) But as this truth often occurs in the Prophets, it is enough here to touch on it by the way, as I have handled it more fully elsewhere.

As to the latter part of the verse, there is some ambiguity,—*for who is he, this*, &c. There are two demonstrative pronouns, זה הוא, *hua, ze*. Afterwards comes ערב, *oreb*, *fitting* his heart. The verb ערב, *oreb*, means to be a surety, and also to fit, to adapt, to accommodate, or to form, and sometimes to render sweet or pleasant; and on this account some have thus translated, "Who will allure his heart?" He then adds, *that he may come to me, saith Jehovah?* I have said that this passage is obscure, and it has hence been turned into various meanings by interpreters. Some apply the words to Christ, that he alone has of his own accord come to the Father. Others consider a negative to be understood, as though it was said, that no one prepares his heart to come to God. But there are some who regard the passage as an exhortation, "Who is he who will apply his heart that he may come to me?" Now, if we read it as expressing astonishment or wonder, it would be, in my view, its real meaning. I am not aware that any one has mentioned this; but the Prophet, I have no doubt, intended his words to be so understood.

He said before, "I will cause him to draw nigh, that he may come to me." I have already explained this of the people, who had been long rejected. God then promises

just said, that a happy life is complete in all its parts, when God promises to be a God to us and takes us as his people. The Prophets, therefore, do not without reason so often inculcate this truth; for though nothing else might be wanting to us that could be expected, yet until we feel assured that God is a Father to us, and that we are his people, whatever happiness we may have, it will only end in misery.

But the Prophet expresses himself more fully, when he says, *At that time*, that is, when God restored his Church, *will I be a God to all the families of Israel.* They had been so scattered, that they were not one body; but God promises the gathering of that Church, from which the ten tribes had fallen off, when they revolted from the family of David. I cannot proceed farther now.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast manifested to us in thine only-begotten Son all the paternal goodness of which the fathers formerly tasted, and hast so really and fully exhibited it, that nothing more can be desired by us,—O grant, that we may remain fixed in our trust in thee, and so cleave by true faith and in sincerity of heart to our Redeemer, that we may expect from him all things necessary for our salvation: and may we know that whatever may happen to us, we are still blessed, provided we enjoy this singular privilege, to call on thee as our Father through the name of the same thy Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Seventeenth.

We compared yesterday the two verses in which God promises that he would yet be a God to his people. We stated what this promise means. But the latter verse specifies the time, in order that the Israelites might wait for and expect this favour, though not as yet evident: hence it is said, *At that time.* He afterwards adds, *I will be a God to all the families of Israel*, and for this reason, because they had been so dispersed, that they did not appear as one people, and were like different nations. Here, then, a promise is made that the people would be collected together, so that

me?" that is, "I will contrive means that they may unite again in one body, call on me and enjoy their inheritance: this will I do that they may come to me; but many will still live in their own dregs, and prefer Chaldea and other countries to the temple and religion. Many, then, will be they who will not form their heart to come to me."

We now understand the meaning of the Prophet. But we must at the same time bear in mind, that by saying above, "I will cause him to draw near that he may come to me," God does not speak of the hidden working of his Spirit; for it is in his power, as we shall presently remark, to draw the hearts of men to himself whenever he pleases. But when he said, *I will cause him to draw nigh*, &c., he spoke only of an outward restoration; and now he adds a complaint, that the Jews would wickedly repudiate this favour, for no one would prepare his heart. We yet see that the whole fault is cast on the Jews, that they were to be deprived of their own country: for it was owing to nothing on God's part that they were not restored, but to themselves, because they were devoted to their own pleasure, and regarded their return and to be counted God's people as nothing. It was therefore the object of the Prophet to ascribe to the Jews the whole fault that God's favour would not come to them, or that it would not be effectual as to the greatest part of them, even because they would not prepare or form their heart, that they might come to God, in order that they might be partakers of that invaluable privilege offered to them.

Now, the Papists lay hold on this passage to prove that there is a free-will in man to come to God; but to do so is indeed very absurd. For whenever God condemns the hardness of the people, he doubtless does not argue the question, what power there is in men, whether they can turn to do what is good, whether they can guide their own hearts. To hold this would be extremely foolish. When it is said in Psalm xcv. 8, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as your fathers in the wilderness," shall we say that as they hardened their hearts they were capable of turning, so that they could by the power of free-will choose either good or evil? To say this would be puerile and ex-

perly, a tempest gathering itself. The verb is גּוֹר, *gur*, in a reduplicate form and in *Hithpael*. A similar sentence is found in ch. xxiii. 19; but there the Prophet used another word as required by the subject.[1] Some render it "falling," for גּוֹר, *gur*, means to fall; and this meaning is suitable, "a falling storm," that is, impetuously descending, so as to abide on the head of the wicked. But the former sense has been more generally taken, and I am disposed to embrace it; for it tends to shake men with terror, when the storm is said to be like a whirlwind, for it turns and twists around, so that it cannot be avoided. The meaning then is, that God's vengeance would be fatal to all the wicked. But we may take the wicked, רִשְׁעִים, *reshoim*, for the despisers of God, though boasting of his name, as well as for aliens: but I am inclined to include both, even domestic and foreign enemies of God; as though the Prophet had said, that no remedy remained, except they fled to the mercy of God. It afterwards follows,—

24. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done *it*, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

24. Non revertetur (*vertunt*) furor iræ Jehovæ, donec exequatur ipsum, et donec surgere faciat (attollat, *vel*, stabiliat) cogitationes cordis sui: in extremo dierum intelligatis in hac re.

He confirms the last sentence, and compares the wrath or the vengeance of God to a messenger or a minister, who is sent to carry a message, or to perform what has been commanded him. Of God's word, that is, of his threatenings as well as of his promises, Isaiah speaks thus, "My word shall not return to me void." (Is. lv. 11.) The meaning is, that whatever God promises or threatens, is never without its effect. But they wrongly understand the passage who say

[1] This verse is literally the same, word for word, with the passage referred to here, with the exception of the word that is noticed; and yet neither the early versions nor the *Targum* are the same: it is singular how they differ from themselves, so that we can have no confidence in their verbal accuracy. Instead of "the pregnant tempest" in ch. xxiii. 19, we have here "the violent tempest;" it is a participle from a verb which means to agitate, to excite, to stir up; and being passive, it means what is agitated or in great commotion, and hence violent or turbulent. See vol. iii., note in p. 173.

Many copies have ו here before סַעַר, as in the former passage, where it is omitted only in one copy.—*Ed.*

that the word of God returns not void, because it brings forth fruit; for he speaks of the effect of the word, whether for salvation or for perdition. So now also God declares that his vengeance, when gone forth, shall not return until it fulfils what has been commanded.

He then adds, *and until he shall have confirmed*, &c.; for so the verb הקימו, *ekimu*, properly means: until God then *shall have confirmed* or established *the thoughts of his heart*. The thoughts of his heart he calls the decrees or purposes of God; but it is a mode of speaking taken from men, and therefore metaphorical; for it is not consistent with what God is, either to think or to deliberate. But, as to the subject itself, there is nothing ambiguous; for the Prophet means, that when God sends forth his vengeance, all the wicked must perish, for so has God decreed, and his purposes can never be frustrated. Then he shews that God's vengeance will be accomplished, because God has so determined. For God does not dissemble when he promises salvation to men, or denounces on them the punishment which they have deserved; but he executes the decrees or purposes of his heart.[1]

Then the Prophet here condemns the stupidity of all those who thought that they could escape, though they had often heard that their guilt was so great that they must at last be visited with judgment. Though they had often heard this, yet they were deaf to all warnings; and it was for this reason that the Prophet spoke of the thoughts of God's heart.

At last he adds, *At the extremity of days ye shall understand this*. This may be applied to the faithful no less than to the wicked. For though the faithful embraced God's promises, and relied on them, yet, as they had to contend con-

[1] The verse is literally as follows,—

Turn not away shall the burning of Jehovah's wrath,
Until his execution and until his completion
Of the purposes of his heart:
In the latter days ye shall understand it.

A verb in the infinitive mood in Hebrew is used often as a noun, "his execution." A similar form exists in Welsh, *nes gwneuthur ohono*. "Until he hath confirmed," or "performed," according to our version, is better rendered in the *Vulg.*, "until he hath completed." Here is the execution and the completion.—*Ed.*

stantly with the heaviest trials, it was necessary to stimulate and animate them to patience. It might then be suitably said to them, "Ye shall understand this in the last days;" it being a kind of exhortation, as though he had said, "Ye indeed think the wicked happy, because God does not immediately punish them, because his vengeance does not instantly break forth in thunders against them; but patiently bear your miseries, and ye shall at length find that their destruction has not been in vain predicted; and ye shall also receive a reward for your faith and patience, if ye continue resigned to the last." But the sentence may also be suitably applied to the wicked, because they were wont to form their judgment according to the present aspect of things. Hence the Prophet exposes the false opinion by which they deceived themselves, and says, that too late they would understand what they were then unwilling to perceive.

If then we explain this sentence of the children of God, it is an exhortation to bear patiently their evils until God appeared as their defender: but if we apply it to the unbelieving, it is a derision of their insensibility, because they regarded as fables all threatenings; but the Prophet exclaims, "Ye shall at last become wise, but it will be too late." Even experience becomes a teacher when there is no more opportunity to repent.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1. At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

1. In tempore illo, dicit Jehova, ero in Deum cunctis cognationibus Israel; et ipsi mihi in populum.

2. Thus saith the Lord, The people *which were* left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; *even* Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.

2. Sic dicit Jehova, Invenit gratiam in deserto populus qui evaserant à gladio, proficiscendo donec quietem daret ipsi Israeli (*vel* profectus est Israel, donec se ad quietem conferret.)

I omit here any remarks on the first verse; for it was explained in connection with the 22d verse of the last chapter. The verb הלוך, *eluk*, in the second verse, is in the infinitive mood, but it is to be taken as a preterite, and in this

interpreters agree. But some apply it to God, that he is a leader to his people, until he brings them to rest; and as the verb, להרגיעו, *laeregiou*, to rest him, so to speak, is in *Hiphil*, it seems that this ought to be ascribed to God. But we may take the words more simply, "until he betakes himself to rest;" added afterwards is the word "Israel;" and thus we may render the pronoun "himself," and not "him," —*until* then *he betook himself to rest.*[1]

Let us now come to the truth which the Prophet handles: he reminds the people, no doubt, of the ancient benefits of God, in order that the miserable exiles might entertain hope, and not doubt but that God would be their deliverer, though they were drowned, as it were, in Chaldea, and overwhelmed with a deluge of evils. This is the reason why he mentions the *desert*, and why Jeremiah also adds, that they who were then preserved *had escaped from the sword.* For the people, though they dwelt in a pleasant and fertile country, were in a manner in a desert, when compared with their own country. As then the Israelites had been driven far away into foreign lands, all the regions where they then inhabited are compared to a desert. A similar mode of speaking is adopted by Isaiah when he says, "A voice crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight paths in the wilderness." (Is. xl. 3.) What did he understand then by

[1] The early versions and the *Targum* vary much as to the meaning of this and the following verse. The nearest to the Original, as a whole, is the *Vulg.*; the *Sept.* go wholly astray. Of all the expositions which have been given, that of *Calvin* seems the best, as it corresponds more with the Hebrew. I render the second verse thus,—

Thus saith Jehovah,—
Find favour in the wilderness
Did the people, the remnants of the sword,
When proceeding to his rest *was* Israel.

I take הלוך as a participle, the auxiliary verb being understood, as the case often is in Hebrew. Preceded by a preposition, and followed by a pronoun. הרגיע is a verb in the infinitive mood, used as a noun. Twelve MSS., says *Blayney*, have הלך a past tense in *Kal:* if so, then the meaning would be more striking, though somewhat elliptical,—

Proceed (or advance) to his rest did Israel.

As though he had said, "The people, who escaped the sword of Pharaoh and the slaughters which happened to them, found favour during their passage through the wilderness, and notwithstanding all opposition, Israel advanced forward to his promised rest."—*Ed.*

desert? even the most fertile regions, Chaldea, Assyria, and other neighbouring countries. But with regard to the people, he thus calls these countries, because their exile was always sorrowful and miserable. So then in this place the Prophet, in order to animate the exiles with hope, says, that though they had been sent away to unknown regions, yet distance, or anything else which might seem opposed to their liberation, could not prevent God to restore them; for he formerly liberated their fathers when they were in Egypt. Now as the Jews might again object and say, that they were few in number, and also that they were ever exposed to the sword, as they dwelt among conquerors the most cruel, he says, that their fathers were not preserved otherwise than by a miracle; they had been snatched, as it were, from the midst of death.

We now perceive the design of the Prophet; and we may include in a few words the substance of what he says,— That there was no reason to fear, that God would not, in due time, deliver his people; for it was well known, that when he became formerly the liberator of his people, his power was rendered illustrious in various ways, nay, that it was inconceivably great, since for forty years he nourished his people in the desert, and also that their coming out was as though the dead arose from their graves, for the Egyptians might have easily killed the whole people; so that they were taken as it were from death, when they were led into the land which had been promised to Abraham. There was therefore no doubt but that God would again, in a wonderful way, deliver them, and manifest the same power in liberating them as was formerly exhibited towards their fathers.

A profitable doctrine may hence be gathered: Whenever despair presents itself to our eyes, or whenever our miseries tempt us to despair, let the benefits of God come to our minds, not only those which we ourselves have experienced, but also those which he has in all ages conferred on his Church, according to what David also says, who had this one consolation in his grief, when pressed down with extreme evils and almost overwhelmed with despair, "I remember the days of old." (Psalm cxliii. 5.) So that he not only called to mind the bene-

fits of God which he himself had experienced, but also what he had heard of from his fathers, and what he had read of in the books of Moses. In the same manner the Prophet here reminds us of God's benefits, when we seem to be forsaken by him; for this one thought is capable of alleviating and comforting us. This is the import of the whole. It now follows—

3. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.

3. Ab antiquo Jehova apparuit mihi; atqui dilectione perpetua dilexi te; ideo protraham (*vel*, protraxi, *vel*, extendi) ad te clementiam.

The last part is commonly rendered, "I have therefore drawn thee in mercy;" but the sense is frigid and unsuitable. I therefore doubt not but that he, on the contrary, means, that the mercy of God would not be evanescent, but would follow the people from year to year in all ages. At the beginning of the verse the Prophet introduces the Jews as making a clamour, as the unbelieving are wont to do, who, while they reject the favour of God, yet wish to appear to do so with some reason. Then, in the first place, is narrated the blasphemy of the people. These impious and diabolical words were no doubt everywhere heard at that time, "Ho! God has appeared to us, but it was a long while ago:" as profane men say at this day, when we bring forward examples of God's favour from the Law or from the Prophets, or from the Gospel, *Ho! c'est du temps jadis.* Thus, they facetiously deride whatever God has at any time testified in his word, as though it were obsolete, because it is ancient. It is the same when we announce any terrors according to ancient examples, "Ho! it happened formerly, but a long time ago." They then always return to that impious common saying, *Le temps jadis.* And the same thing Jeremiah meant to express here, *At a remote time Jehovah appeared to us;* that is, "Thou indeed speakest in high terms of the redemption by which the fathers were liberated, but what is that to us? why dost not thou rather shew us plainly what God intends to do? and why dost thou not bring forward some ground for present joy? why dost thou not really prove that God is propitious to us? but thou speakest of the ancient deliverance, while that narrative is now as it were obsolete."

We hence see, that men have been always from the beginning ungrateful to God; for as far as they could, they buried the kind acts of God; nor by this only was their impiety discovered, but because they treated with scorn all ancient histories, which have yet been preserved for us, in order that our salvation might be promoted. "Whatsoever is written," says Paul, "has been written for our instruction, that through the patience and the consolation of the Scripture we might have hope." (Rom. xv. 4.) He there shews that we are to learn patience from the examples contained in the Scripture, and that we have there a ground for strong consolation, so that we may cherish hope until God delivers us from all miseries. But what say the profane? "Ho, thou tellest us what has been written, but this is remote from us, and through length of time has vanished away: what is antiquity to us?" But though the Jews used this sacrilegious language, let us yet learn to embrace whatever is set before us in Scripture, while God invites us to hope for mercy, and at the same time exhorts us to patience; nor let this blasphemy ever fall from our mouths; nay, let not this thought ever creep into our hearts, "God appeared a long while ago." Let us then abominate the ingratitude of those who would have God to be always present, and yet pay no regard to his ancient benefits.

Hence the Prophet answers, *But*, &c.: the copulative ו is here an adversative, as though he had said, Nay, or Yea, for it may also be taken for גַּם, *gam*, "Yea, I have loved thee with perpetual love." Then God answers the ungodly, and shews, that he having become once the liberator of his people, did not undertake this office through a momentary impulse, but because he had so promised to Abraham, and had adopted the people. Since then God's covenant was perpetual, he thus refutes here the impious calumny, that God acted bountifully only for a moment towards his people, and had regard only once for their miseries, so as to help them. *Yea*, he says, *I have loved thee with perpetual love.* God then here shews, that the redemption, by which he had exhibited a remarkable proof of his mercy, was founded on the gratuitous adoption which was not for

one year, but perpetual in its duration. We thus see that he reproves the detestable blasphemy of the people, and intimates that adoption was the cause of their redemption.

And this passage ought to be carefully noticed: for these false imaginations come immediately to our minds, when we read or hear how God had in various ways and degrees been merciful towards his people, "Ho! that happened formerly, but we know not whether God's purpose remains the same; he, indeed, conferred this favour on his ancient people, but we know not whether the same can or will be extended to us." Thus the devil, by his craft, suggests to us these false imaginations, which impede the flow of God's favour, that it may not come to us. So the grace of God is stopped in its course, when we thus separate ourselves from the fathers, and from all his servants towards whom he has been so merciful. It is, therefore, a doctrine especially useful, when the Prophet shews, that whatever blessings God has at any time conferred on his ancient people, they ought to be ascribed to his gratuitous covenant, and that that covenant is eternal: and hence there is no doubt but that God is at this day prepared to secure the salvation of all the godly; for he remains ever the same, and never changes; and he would also have his fidelity and constancy to shine forth in the covenant which he has made with his Church. Since, then, the covenant of God is inviolable and cannot fail, even were heaven and earth brought into confusion, we ought to feel assured that God will ever be a deliverer to us: how so? because his covenant remains the same; and, therefore, his power to deliver us will remain the same. This is the use we ought to make of this clause.

A confirmation afterwards follows, *Therefore have I prolonged towards thee my mercy.* I have already said, that this clause is otherwise rendered and explained. But nothing can be more diluted when we read thus, "I have drawn thee in mercy." What has this to do with the perpetuity or the continued course and progress of love? But the other meaning is very suitable, that God would prolong his mercy to Israel. There is understood only one letter, but this does

not interfere with the sense; and such forms of speech are elsewhere often found. He then says, that as he had embraced Israel with perpetual love, he had, therefore, drawn out or extended his mercy; for from the time he delivered his people from the tyranny of Pharaoh, and fed them forty years in the desert, he had bestowed on them many benefits. For with what victories favoured he them? and then how often had he pitied them? God then ceased not from continuing his mercy to them from the time he had stretched forth his hand to them. And according to this view it is very appropriately said, that he had prolonged his mercy; for not only for one day or one year did he shew himself propitious to the Israelites, but he had exhibited himself the same for four hundred, five hundred, six hundred years. And thus also is best confuted that impiety and blasphemy of the people, that God had formerly appeared to them; "Nay," he says, "except thou suppressest most wickedly my benefits, thou must perceive that the benefits I conferred on thy fathers have been long extended to thee, and have been perpetual and manifold."[1]

We now perceive the real meaning of the Prophet. Were any to prefer turning the preterite to the future, I would not object, "Therefore will I prolong (or extend) towards thee my mercy." This sense would be suitable. But when the words are taken as they are, we see why the Prophet adds, that God's mercy had been prolonged, that is, that he might condemn the ingratitude of the Jews, because they did not rightly consider the benefits which had been bestowed on them for so many ages. It follows—

[1] I find nothing satisfactory as to this verse, except the explanation here given, and it is that of the *Targum*. The first clause is the people's cavilling answer to what is declared in the foregoing verse. Jacob is the person introduced, as representing the people. He says, it is indeed true,—

"At a remote period Jehovah appeared to me."

Then the rejoinder to this is exactly suitable,—

But with perpetual love have I loved thee,
Therefore have I prolonged to thee mercy.

Or, "extended to thee mercy," (see Psal. cix. 12,) or, "continued to thee mercy," or, according to *Blayney*, "lengthened out mercy to thee." Now there is a consistency in the whole passage, according to this view, and also in what follows, "I will again build thee," &c.—*Ed.*

the Prophet reminds the faithful here that they are so to praise God as not to neglect prayer.

The meaning is, that when God promises that he will be propitious to us, he gives us a sufficient reason for joy. We ought then to be satisfied with the naked word of God, when he declares that he will be a Father to us, and when he promises that our salvation will be the object of his care. But yet, as I have already said, joy ought not to render us secure, so as to make faith idle, but it ought rather to stimulate us to prayer. True and spiritual joy we then have, derived from God's word, when we are diligent in prayer; and coldness and security are no tokens of faith, but of insensibility; and the promises of God produce no real effects in us, as it must needs be, unless our minds are kindled into a desire for prayer, yea, into a fervour in prayer. This then is the reason why the Prophet, after having bidden the faithful to praise and exalt the favour of God, adds this prayer,—"Say ye, Save thou, Jehovah, thy people." It then behoved them so to rejoice as to feel solicitous for the restoration of the Church. And it behoves us, also, at this time, whenever God shines on us with the testimony of his favour, so to rejoice as not to omit that primary exercise of faith, even prayer.

He further adds, *the remnant of Israel*, because it was necessary that what Isaiah had predicted should be fulfilled, "Though thy people were as sand of the sea, a remnant only shall be delivered." (Is. x. 22.) Though, then, the Prophet has been speaking generally of all the posterity of Abraham, and included the ten tribes, yet here he qualifies that statement by mentioning *the remnant* or residue *of Israel*, and this in order that the faithful might not despond on seeing hardly one in ten or in fifty returning from exile; for we know that in comparison of their great number, a few only returned from exile. He has then mentioned here "the remnant of Israel," that the faithful at a future time might not be shaken in their hope, though God did not immediately restore the whole Church; and it was also necessary to deprive the hypocrites of that vain confidence with which they were filled; for they were wont to seize on everything which God

promised by his servants. Hence Jeremiah excluded them, that they might know that this promise did not belong to them, according to what Paul, while handling this subject, shews to us at large. (Rom. ix. 27; xi. 5, 7.) And he is a correct interpreter of this passage and of similar ones, when he says that God was never so bound to the people of Israel, but that he could freely do what he pleased, so that a remnant only should he saved. And he calls them the "remnant of grace," because they are in no other way saved than through the free and gratuitous goodness of God.

And this doctrine may also be justly applied to our time. For we are by no means to expect that God will so restore his Church in the world, that all shall be renewed by his Spirit, and unite in true religion; but he gathers his Church on all sides, and yet in such a way, that his gratuitous mercy ever appears, because there shall be remnants only. It follows,—

8. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, *and* with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

8. Ecce reducens ipsos e terra Aquilonis: et congregabo eos ex lateribus terræ; in ipsis erunt cæcus et claudus, prægnans et puerpera simul, cœtus magnus revertentur huc.

The Prophet again confirms the same truth, but with amplification. For this oracle is not only prefaced as having proceeded from God, but that the address might be more forcible, he introduces God himself as the speaker, *Behold me restoring them from the land of the north;* for Babylon, as it is well known, was northward from Judea. And whenever the Prophets speak of the deliverance of the people, they ever name the north; as, also, when they threaten the people, they say that an army or a calamity was to come from the north. They had before been delivered from the south, for such was the situation of Egypt. The Prophet now intimates that God was furnished with power to liberate them again from the land of the north.

Then he says, *and I will collect them from the sides of the earth:* by *sides*, he means the extremities or the corners, so to speak, of the earth; as though he had said, that their dispersion would not prevent God from collecting his people.

one year, but perpetual in its duration. We thus see that he reproves the detestable blasphemy of the people, and intimates that adoption was the cause of their redemption.

And this passage ought to be carefully noticed: for these false imaginations come immediately to our minds, when we read or hear how God had in various ways and degrees been merciful towards his people, "Ho! that happened formerly, but we know not whether God's purpose remains the same; he, indeed, conferred this favour on his ancient people, but we know not whether the same can or will be extended to us." Thus the devil, by his craft, suggests to us these false imaginations, which impede the flow of God's favour, that it may not come to us. So the grace of God is stopped in its course, when we thus separate ourselves from the fathers, and from all his servants towards whom he has been so merciful. It is, therefore, a doctrine especially useful, when the Prophet shews, that whatever blessings God has at any time conferred on his ancient people, they ought to be ascribed to his gratuitous covenant, and that that covenant is eternal: and hence there is no doubt but that God is at this day prepared to secure the salvation of all the godly; for he remains ever the same, and never changes; and he would also have his fidelity and constancy to shine forth in the covenant which he has made with his Church. Since, then, the covenant of God is inviolable and cannot fail, even were heaven and earth brought into confusion, we ought to feel assured that God will ever be a deliverer to us: how so? because his covenant remains the same; and, therefore, his power to deliver us will remain the same. This is the use we ought to make of this clause.

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a mistake almost inbred in us by nature, and engrosses all our thoughts and feelings. Hence arises want of confidence in God, and hence it also happens, that all God's promises become frigid to us, or at least lose their just value. For when God promises anything, we look around us and inquire how it can be fulfilled; and if our minds cannot comprehend the way and manner, we reject what has proceeded from the mouth of God. Let us then attend to this prophetic doctrine; and when God seems to promise what surpasses our faith, nay, what appears to us by no means possible, let this doctrine come to our minds, and let it serve as a corrective to check our false thoughts, lest we, having our minds preoccupied by a false and preposterous opinion, should do wrong to the power of God. If, then, the deliverance which God promises seems incredible, as to our perceptions, let us remember that it is in his power to make the blind to see, the lame to walk, the pregnant and those lying in childbed, to undertake a journey; for he can by his power surmount all obstacles, so that we shall find our faith victorious, provided we learn to rely on God's promises, and firmly rest on them. We now understand what use we ought to make of this prophecy. It follows afterwards—

9. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim *is* my firstborn.

9. Cum fletu venient, et in precationibus (*vel*, miserationibus) addiscam eos; deducam ad fluvios aquarum, in viam rectam, ubi non impingent (non impingent in ea, *ad verbum, sed* בה *debet resolvi in relativum*;) quoniam ero Israeli in Patrem, et Ephraim primogenitus meus ipse.

The Prophet still pursues the same subject; but he adds, that though they went with weeping into exile, yet that would be no impediment, that God should not restore them again to their own country: for I take the beginning of this verse, *in weeping shall they come*, in an adversative sense. Some explain weeping as the effect of joy; for joy as well as grief sometimes brings tears. Some then think the meaning of the Prophet to be, that so great would be the joy on their return, that tears would flow from their eyes. But I, on the

contrary, think, that the Prophet means what was afterwards repeated in one of the Psalms, "Going forth they went forth and wept; but coming they shall come with exultation, carrying their sheaves." (Ps. cxxvi. 6.) For the Prophet compares the exile of the people to sowing; for except the seed cast on the earth dies, it remains dry and barren, and does not germinate: the death then of the seed is the cause of production. So also it was necessary for the people to be by exile thus cast on the ground, that their calamity might be a kind of death to them. But he says that the Jews when cast forth as a seed, that is, when driven into exile to be put to death by the chastening rod of God, "had come with weeping;" but that afterwards they returned with joy as in harvest, that is, when liberty to return was granted them. So also the Prophet here speaks, as I think, in an adversative sense, of the Jews; the particle *though* is to be understood.

It afterwards follows, *With prayers*, or mercies, *will I lead them*. The word תחנונים, *techenunim*, which is found mostly in the plural number, means prayers; and I know not whether this sense is suitable here. In Zechariah, the word being connected with grace, it cannot be otherwise explained than of mercy, (Zech. vii. 9;) and I am inclined to adopt this meaning here, even that the weeping of the people would be no hinderance, that God should not at last shew mercy to them, and turn their weeping and tears into laughter and joy. But if any one prefers to render the word, prayers, the sense would not be improper; that is, that when they began suppliantly to confess their sins, and to flee to God's mercy, there would then come the time of joy. But weeping then must be applied to blind grief, for the Jews were not as yet subdued so as to submit to God, to be humbled and to repent. Hence weeping is to be taken in a bad sense, even for grief, mixed with perverseness, when they murmured against God; and the Prophet must have taken prayers as tokens of repentance, that is, when the Jews, having been truly convinced of their sins by many and continual evils, would begin to flee to God's mercy. But he seems rather to set God's mercies in opposition to the sor-

Now this passage is especially useful; for we may hence learn what is the right state of the Church; it is when all agree in one faith. But we must, at the same time, see what is the foundation of this faith. The Papists indeed boast of this union, but yet they pass by what ought to hold the first place, that is, that all must have regard to the only true God, according to what they are taught by his word. Hence the Prophet here mentions Mount Sion, which had been chosen by God, that he might shew that no unity pleases God, unless men obey his word from the least to the greatest, and not follow their own imaginations, but embrace what he teaches and prescribes in his Law. This is the import of this passage. The Israelites shall then call him *their God*, from whom they had before wickedly departed. It follows—

7. For thus saith the Lord, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

7. Quia sic dicit Jehova, Exultate propter Jacob in lætitia (*vel* cum Jacob, *nam* ל potest utroque modo accipi,) et jubilate in capite gentium; promulgate, laudate, et dicite, Serva Jehova populum suum, reliquias Israel.

The Prophet confirms the contents of the verse we have explained; and it was necessary to make this addition, because what he had said was almost incredible. He therefore enlarged upon it. *Thus saith Jehovah;* this preface he made, as I have often reminded you, that his doctrine might have

> Shout ye, 'To Jacob *there is* joy,'
> And cry it aloud among the chief of the nations;
> Publish, exultingly proclaim, and say,
> 'Saved hath Jehovah thy people,
> The remnant of Israel.'"

The passage is a sort of an episode. What follows seems well connected with the former part of the 5th verse.

"Eat the fruit," is the meaning, and not the literal version, which can hardly be given: it is so rendered by *Blayney*. "Call ye," or, proclaim, or, give the invitation. The news was to be made known "among the chief of the nations," as it is evident from the 10th verse. "Saved," &c., so the *Sept.* and the *Targum*, and more consistent with the context than "save;" but both have "his," *i.e.*, God's, instead of "thy people," *i.e.*, Jacob's. The verb הללו means not only to praise, but also to boast, to exult, and here evidently to proclaim with exultation or triumph. It is rendered here "sing ye," by the *Vulg.* and *Syr.*

It is worthy of notice, that in this episode the particulars, mentioned in the 4th verse, and the beginning of the 5th, are referred to in their reversed order.—*Ed.*

become plain, and the crooked (or tortuous) become straight ways." We thus see how these prophecies harmonize, and ought to be regarded as teaching the same thing,—that God surmounts all obstacles when it is his purpose to save his Church; for how much soever all the elements may unite against the salvation of the godly, God can by one breath dissipate them all, and cast down the loftiest mountains that may be in his way, and give rivers in deserts and dry lands; and thus he can constrain to obey him whatever may seem opposed to the salvation of his Church.

He afterwards adds, *for I shall be a Father to Israel, Ephraim my first-born he,* or shall be; for הוּא, *eua,* as it is well known, is taken in the place of a verb. Here Jeremiah points out the cause, and as it were the fountain of the deliverance of which he has been hitherto speaking, even because God would become reconciled to his people. He intimates also the cause of the exile and of all the evils that had been and would be, because they had provoked God by their sins. God had indeed adopted them as his people in the person of Abraham; but the Prophet intimates an interruption when he says, *I will be,* though the covenant of God had never been annulled. He was then ever the Father of the Church, but the benefit of adoption did not appear; as to outward appearance the people seemed as rejected, as it has been said in other places: and on this subject Hosea also speaks in these words, "I will say to her who obtained not mercy, Thou shalt obtain mercy; I will say to the not beloved, Thou art a beloved people." (Hos. ii. 23.) For nothing could have been said of the Jews when expelled from their inheritance, but that they were wholly alienated from God. He was therefore no Father to them at that time, that is, he did not appear to be so, although he did prove himself to be a Father really and effectually. He then began to be a Father when the people returned into their own country, because God's favour then shone forth, which for a time had been as it were extinct.[1]

[1] What is here said is no doubt true: but the auxiliary verb is, "I was," not "I shall be;" and so it is rendered by the *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, and *Targ.*; and by the *Syr.*, "I am." Then the Versions, very incorrectly, give the

in a simpler way,—that the Prophet bids them to exult *at the head of nations*, as though he had said, "openly, so that your joy may be observed by all." For though the Jews entertained the hope of a return, yet they hardly dared to give any sign of their confidence, because they might have thus exasperated the minds of their enemies. They were, therefore, under the necessity of being wholly silent, and, as it were, without life. Now the Prophet sets this manifest joy in opposition to that fear which constrained the Jews to be almost wholly mute, so that they dared not by gesture nor by words, to make known what they had learned from the holy servants of God. In short, the Prophet intimates that the liberation of the Jews would be so glorious, that they would dread no danger in proclaiming openly the kindness of God. This seems to be denoted by *the head of the nations*.

He then adds, *Proclaim ye, praise and say, Save*, &c. This refers properly to the faithful; for we know that God is not really invoked by the unbelieving. Faith alone opens a door of access to us, and there cannot be any right praying except what proceeds from faith. The Prophet then addresses here the children of God, when he says, "Proclaim ye, praise and say," &c. And though all the ungodly were by evident experience convinced of the wonderful power of God, yet there was not among them any herald of God's grace. It is then enjoined on the faithful, as their own proper office, to celebrate the favour of God. And to this is added thanksgiving, as though the Prophet had said that God's grace cannot be rightly proclaimed unless his goodness be acknowledged, and the sacrifice of praise be offered to him. We hence learn that we are to be so animated by his promises to trust in God as not to grow torpid. For many cheer themselves up when they hear some joyful news, but this joy produces in them security. Thus it comes that faith is choked, and does not produce its proper fruits; for the chief work of faith is prayer to God. Now, they who are secure because they think of no danger, do not flee to God, and thus omit that work of religion in which they ought mainly to exercise themselves. Hence

the Prophet reminds the faithful here that they are so to praise God as not to neglect prayer.

The meaning is, that when God promises that he will be propitious to us, he gives us a sufficient reason for joy. We ought then to be satisfied with the naked word of God, when he declares that he will be a Father to us, and when he promises that our salvation will be the object of his care. But yet, as I have already said, joy ought not to render us secure, so as to make faith idle, but it ought rather to stimulate us to prayer. True and spiritual joy we then have, derived from God's word, when we are diligent in prayer; and coldness and security are no tokens of faith, but of insensibility; and the promises of God produce no real effects in us, as it must needs be, unless our minds are kindled into a desire for prayer, yea, into a fervour in prayer. This then is the reason why the Prophet, after having bidden the faithful to praise and exalt the favour of God, adds this prayer,—"Say ye, Save thou, Jehovah, thy people." It then behoved them so to rejoice as to feel solicitous for the restoration of the Church. And it behoves us, also, at this time, whenever God shines on us with the testimony of his favour, so to rejoice as not to omit that primary exercise of faith, even prayer.

He further adds, *the remnant of Israel*, because it was necessary that what Isaiah had predicted should be fulfilled, "Though thy people were as sand of the sea, a remnant only shall be delivered." (Is. x. 22.) Though, then, the Prophet has been speaking generally of all the posterity of Abraham, and included the ten tribes, yet here he qualifies that statement by mentioning *the remnant* or residue *of Israel*, and this in order that the faithful might not despond on seeing hardly one in ten or in fifty returning from exile; for we know that in comparison of their great number, a few only returned from exile. He has then mentioned here "the remnant of Israel," that the faithful at a future time might not be shaken in their hope, though God did not immediately restore the whole Church; and it was also necessary to deprive the hypocrites of that vain confidence with which they were filled; for they were wont to seize on everything which God

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8. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, *and* with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

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The Prophet again confirms the same truth, but with amplification. For this oracle is not only prefaced as having proceeded from God, but that the address might be more forcible, he introduces God himself as the speaker, *Behold me restoring them from the land of the north ;* for Babylon, as it is well known, was northward from Judea. And whenever the Prophets speak of the deliverance of the people, they ever name the north ; as, also, when they threaten the people, they say that an army or a calamity was to come from the north. They had before been delivered from the south, for such was the situation of Egypt. The Prophet now intimates that God was furnished with power to liberate them again from the land of the north.

Then he says, *and I will collect them from the sides of the earth :* by *sides*, he means the extremities or the corners, so to speak, of the earth ; as though he had said, that their dispersion would not prevent God from collecting his people.

Nearly the same promise was announced by Moses, though in other words,—"Though thou wert dispersed through the four quarters of the world, I will yet from thence collect thee." (Deut. xxx. 4.) God there means that distance of places would be no obstacle to him, but that as soon as the fit time arrived, he would again collect his Church from its dispersion. We hence see what the Prophet understands by the *sides* of the earth. And he intended to obviate a doubt which might have depressed the minds of the people on seeing the body torn and deformed: "Eh! how can it be, that we can again come together?" In order then to remove this doubt, the Prophet says that God would come to collect his people again, not only from one corner, but also from the extreme regions of the earth.

He then adopts another mode of speaking, in order to shew that no impediment would be so strong as to exceed God's power, when his purpose was to deliver his people: *The blind,* he says, *and the lame, the pregnant, and the one in travail, shall come.* The blind cannot move a step without stumbling or falling; then the blind are by no means fit to undertake a journey, for there is no way which they can see as open for them; and the lame, when there is a way for them, cannot make any progress. But God promises that such would be their deliverance, that both the lame and the blind would participate of it. He then mentions the *pregnant and women in childbed.* The pregnant, owing to the burden she carries, cannot undertake a long journey, and she that is recently confined, can hardly dare to leave her bed, being so debilitated by parturition; but God promises that the pregnant and the lately confined shall return with the rest; as though he had said, that there was no fear but that God would restore his Church, because his power was superior to all the impediments of the world, so that he could confirm the feeble, guide the blind, sustain the lame, and strengthen the pregnant and those lying in childbed.

Now, though the Prophet addressed this discourse to the ancient people, it yet contains a doctrine perpetually useful. We hence gather, that they act preposterously who estimate God's favour according to present appearances. But this is

a mistake almost inbred in us by nature, and engrosses all our thoughts and feelings. Hence arises want of confidence in God, and hence it also happens, that all God's promises become frigid to us, or at least lose their just value. For when God promises anything, we look around us and inquire how it can be fulfilled; and if our minds cannot comprehend the way and manner, we reject what has proceeded from the mouth of God. Let us then attend to this prophetic doctrine; and when God seems to promise what surpasses our faith, nay, what appears to us by no means possible, let this doctrine come to our minds, and let it serve as a corrective to check our false thoughts, lest we, having our minds preoccupied by a false and preposterous opinion, should do wrong to the power of God. If, then, the deliverance which God promises seems incredible, as to our perceptions, let us remember that it is in his power to make the blind to see, the lame to walk, the pregnant and those lying in childbed, to undertake a journey; for he can by his power surmount all obstacles, so that we shall find our faith victorious, provided we learn to rely on God's promises, and firmly rest on them. We now understand what use we ought to make of this prophecy. It follows afterwards—

9. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim *is* my firstborn.

9. Cum fletu venient, et in precationibus (*vel*, miserationibus) addiscam eos; deducam ad fluvios aquarum, in viam rectam, ubi non impingent (non impingent in ea, *ad verbum, sed* בה *debet resolvi in relativum;*) quoniam ero Israeli in Patrem, et Ephraim primogenitus meus ipse.

The Prophet still pursues the same subject; but he adds, that though they went with weeping into exile, yet that would be no impediment, that God should not restore them again to their own country: for I take the beginning of this verse, *in weeping shall they come,* in an adversative sense. Some explain weeping as the effect of joy; for joy as well as grief sometimes brings tears. Some then think the meaning of the Prophet to be, that so great would be the joy on their return, that tears would flow from their eyes. But I, on the

contrary, think, that the Prophet means what was afterwards repeated in one of the Psalms, "Going forth they went forth and wept; but coming they shall come with exultation, carrying their sheaves." (Ps. cxxvi. 6.) For the Prophet compares the exile of the people to sowing; for except the seed cast on the earth dies, it remains dry and barren, and does not germinate: the death then of the seed is the cause of production. So also it was necessary for the people to be by exile thus cast on the ground, that their calamity might be a kind of death to them. But he says that the Jews when cast forth as a seed, that is, when driven into exile to be put to death by the chastening rod of God, "had come with weeping;" but that afterwards they returned with joy as in harvest, that is, when liberty to return was granted them. So also the Prophet here speaks, as I think, in an adversative sense, of the Jews; the particle *though* is to be understood.

It afterwards follows, *With prayers*, or mercies, *will I lead them.* The word תחנונים, *techenunim*, which is found mostly in the plural number, means prayers; and I know not whether this sense is suitable here. In Zechariah, the word being connected with grace, it cannot be otherwise explained than of mercy, (Zech. vii. 9;) and I am inclined to adopt this meaning here, even that the weeping of the people would be no hinderance, that God should not at last shew mercy to them, and turn their weeping and tears into laughter and joy. But if any one prefers to render the word, prayers, the sense would not be improper; that is, that when they began suppliantly to confess their sins, and to flee to God's mercy, there would then come the time of joy. But weeping then must be applied to blind grief, for the Jews were not as yet subdued so as to submit to God, to be humbled and to repent. Hence weeping is to be taken in a bad sense, even for grief, mixed with perverseness, when they murmured against God; and the Prophet must have taken prayers as tokens of repentance, that is, when the Jews, having been truly convinced of their sins by many and continual evils, would begin to flee to God's mercy. But he seems rather to set God's mercies in opposition to the sor-

row in which the Jews were involved when God hid his favour from them.[1]

He adds, *I will lead them to fountains of waters*, according to what is said in the book of Psalms, that they would find fountains and wells on their journey. (Ps. lxxxiv. 6.) For the Jews had to travel through deserts and sterile sands; so they thought that they lived in another world while they were in Chaldea: they remembered how vast was the solitude through which they had passed. Hence then was their despair, so that they refused every comfort when the Prophets exhorted them to entertain good hope. God therefore promises to be their leader on their journey, so that they should not want water in the lonely and barren desert. And we see that the Prophet, by the various figures he uses, means one and the same thing, even that whatever obstacles may meet us, to prevent us from tasting of God's goodness, and to embrace the promises of salvation, they will all vanish away, if we bear in mind the infinite power of God. *I will* then *lead them by fountains of water.*

Then he says, *through a straight way, in which they shall not stumble*, according to what is said in Is. xl. 3, "A voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight the paths of our God; let every valley be raised and mountain be made low, so that rough places may

[1] The *Targ.* and the Versions, excepting the *Vulg.*, give a similar meaning to these two clauses. They give the sense of "departing" to the first verb, while it commonly has the sense of "coming." It is also in the future tense, and therefore cannot refer to the departing of the Israelites, who are meant here, for they had already gone into exile. Their return is no doubt what is spoken of, which would be attended with "weeping," not for joy, but for their sins, as it is distinctly expressed in verses 18 and 19; and also "with entreaties" or supplications. (See ch. iii. 21.) And it is better with *Venema* to join the two words with "coming,"—

> With weeping shall they come and with supplications;
> I will bring them, I will lead them,
> By streams of water, in a straight way;
> They shall not stumble in it.

He promises two things, to "bring" and to "lead;" then the leading refers to the streams of water, and the bringing to the straight way; which is a kind of arrangement that is often to be met with in Scripture. Two things, especially necessary for travellers, are promised, water and a good road. "Straight" seems to apply to the surface of the road as well as to its sides; hence some render it "smooth" or even, such as would have nothing that might cause one to stumble.—*Ed.*

become plain, and the crooked (or tortuous) become straight ways." We thus see how these prophecies harmonize, and ought to be regarded as teaching the same thing,—that God surmounts all obstacles when it is his purpose to save his Church; for how much soever all the elements may unite against the salvation of the godly, God can by one breath dissipate them all, and cast down the loftiest mountains that may be in his way, and give rivers in deserts and dry lands; and thus he can constrain to obey him whatever may seem opposed to the salvation of his Church.

He afterwards adds, *for I shall be a Father to Israel, Ephraim my first-born he*, or shall be; for הוּא, *eua*, as it is well known, is taken in the place of a verb. Here Jeremiah points out the cause, and as it were the fountain of the deliverance of which he has been hitherto speaking, even because God would become reconciled to his people. He intimates also the cause of the exile and of all the evils that had been and would be, because they had provoked God by their sins. God had indeed adopted them as his people in the person of Abraham; but the Prophet intimates an interruption when he says, *I will be*, though the covenant of God had never been annulled. He was then ever the Father of the Church, but the benefit of adoption did not appear; as to outward appearance the people seemed as rejected, as it has been said in other places: and on this subject Hosea also speaks in these words, "I will say to her who obtained not mercy, Thou shalt obtain mercy; I will say to the not beloved, Thou art a beloved people." (Hos. ii. 23.) For nothing could have been said of the Jews when expelled from their inheritance, but that they were wholly alienated from God. He was therefore no Father to them at that time, that is, he did not appear to be so, although he did prove himself to be a Father really and effectually. He then began to be a Father when the people returned into their own country, because God's favour then shone forth, which for a time had been as it were extinct.[1]

[1] What is here said is no doubt true: but the auxiliary verb is, "I was," not "I shall be;" and so it is rendered by the *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, and *Targ.*; and by the *Syr.*, "I am." Then the Versions, very incorrectly, give the

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast so often been pleased to receive into favour thine ancient people, though extremely provoked by their perverse wickedness,—O grant, that mercy may also at this day be shewn to us, and that though we wholly deserve to perish eternally, thou mayest yet stretch forth thine hand to us and grant to us a testimony of thy favour, so that we may be able with a cheerful mind to call on thee as our Father, and ever to entertain hope of thy mercy, until we shall be gathered into that kingdom, where we shall perfectly render to thee the sacrifice of praise, and rejoice in the fruition of that eternal life, which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Nineteenth.

We explained yesterday how God began to be a Father to Israel when he restored him from exile. Adoption, with regard to God, remained indeed the same, as it has been stated; but as to the judgment of men, it was abolished. He then began anew so to collect his people, that they might really know him as their Father.

He afterwards adds, that *Ephraim would be his first-born.* Ephraim is no doubt taken here for the whole people; nor does the Prophet here make any distinction between the two kingdoms, but includes even the tribe of Judah in the name Ephraim, as it is done in many other places. But yet it is proper to observe, that Ephraim is sometimes taken for all the posterity of Abraham, sometimes for the kingdom of Israel, and sometimes for that tribe itself. When the kingdom of Judah is distinguished from the kingdom of Israel, then Ephraim includes only the ten tribes; but in this place the Prophet did not intend to mark the difference between the tribe of Judah and the ten tribes, because it

next clause, in which there is no verb, in the present tense, while it ought to be in the past tense, like the foregoing. The words literally are,—

For I was (or, have been) to Jacob a Father,
And Ephraim, my first-born he (*i.e. was* he.)

And to this purpose has *Blayney* rendered the passage. Whenever the auxiliary verb is understood, its tense must be regulated by the context. On "first-born," see Ex. iv. 22, 23, and 1 Chron. v. 1.—*Ed.*

become evident even to remote nations, yea, the report of which would penetrate into the farthest regions. By *islands* the Prophets mean countries beyond the sea; thus by the Jews, Italy, Spain, Greece, France, were called Islands. Then the Prophet here by remote islands, means all the regions of the world distant from Judea, and especially those beyond the sea.

He afterwards says, *he who has dispersed Israel will gather him.* This sentence confirms the hope of liberation; for God could easily redeem his people, since their exile was a punishment inflicted by his own hand. Had the Chaldeans obtained the victory over them by their own prowess, they might have cast away all hope as to their deliverance. God then exhorts the people here to entertain hope, because he could heal those wounds which he himself had inflicted; as though he had said, "I am he who drove you into exile, am I not able to bring you back? Had you been led away by the power of your enemies, you might be now without any hope of deliverance; but as nothing happened but through my righteous judgment, mercy can bring a remedy for all your evils." Then God shews that their liberation could be easily effected, since the Chaldeans gained nothing by their own power, but as far as he permitted them when chastising his people. He then reasons from contraries, that since he had dispersed, he could also gather them. For had the Israelites been dispersed at the will and pleasure of men, their deliverance might have seemed to be beyond the power of God; but as he had chastised them, he could, as I have just said, heal the wounds inflicted by his own hand.

A useful doctrine may be hence deduced: the Prophet invites the people to repentance by reminding them that God had dispersed them; for had not the miserable people known this and been fully persuaded of it, they would not have fled to God's mercy, nor have regarded him, nor entertained hope of deliverance. It was, therefore, necessary that repentance should in due order precede, that the people might embrace the deliverance offered to them. This is the reason why the Prophet says, that it was God who had *dispersed* Israel. He indeed reasons, as I have said, from con-

traries; but the sentence, no doubt, contains the exhortation which I have now stated, that the people might know that they suffered a just punishment; for it was not by chance, nor by the will of men, but by God's righteous judgment, that they had been driven into exile.

It follows, *and he will guard them as a shepherd his flock.* The Prophet here shews that God's favour would not be momentary, but that their liberation would be the beginning of a deliverance continued to the end; and to know this is most necessary; for what would it avail us to be once delivered by God? Were it so, our salvation would soon fail. But when we hear that we are delivered by God from the tyranny of our enemies for this end, that he may continue towards us his favour, that he may become our perpetual guardian and shepherd, this is a solid ground of confidence. This then is the reason why the Prophet, after having spoken of the deliverance of his people, at the same time adds, that God would be their *shepherd*, that he would perpetually guard and preserve his people. It follows,—

11. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of *him that was* stronger than he.

11. Quia redimet Jehova Jacob et redimet e manu (*est quidem aliud verbum, sed idem significat,* גאל et פדה, *redemit e manu*) potentis (*vel,* robusti) præ ipso.

He goes on with the same subject. He had said before that it would not be a difficult or an arduous work for God to deliver his people; he now says, *Jehovah will redeem his people, and will redeem them from the hand of one more powerful than themselves.* Jeremiah again obviates the doubt which might have dejected the minds of the godly; for this thought ever recurred to them, "How can God redeem us? He might indeed have checked the Chaldeans, but now they rule over the whole East; this monarchy is like a gulf in which the whole world is swallowed up: since then God has thus exalted the Chaldean power, we are wholly without hope." They might then have despaired when they compared this evil with all the remedies that might occur to them. But the Prophet here confirms what he had just stated, that God would be more powerful than the Chaldeans and all other enemies; as though he had said,

"Though your enemies are strong, and ye are like sheep in the jaws of wolves, yet nothing can hinder God from redeeming you."[1]

To the same purpose is what God says often by his Prophets, "Ye have been sold for nothing, and redeemed shall ye be without price," (Is. lii. 3;) as though he had said, "I am not bound to pay anything to the Chaldeans, for I did not sell you to them as by a contract, but I sold you on account of your sins; as to them, they have given me no price: let nothing, therefore, terrify you as though they could oppose your deliverance against my will." How so? "Because they have no right to detain you; therefore, if ye only accept my favour, the strength of your enemies, which appears so formidable, shall not hinder your redemption." This is the reason why he says that the Chaldeans were stronger or more powerful than the Israelites.

This truth is also of no little use to us at this day; for when we consider how great is the strength of our enemies, despair must overwhelm our minds; but this promise comes to our aid—God testifies that he will in such a way be the Deliverer of his people, that the power of men shall not prevent nor delay his work. It follows,—

12. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden: and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

12. Et venient et laudabunt in excelso Zion, et confluent ad beneficentiam Jehovæ, ad triticum et ad vinum et ad oleum, et ad gregem pecudum (*ad verbum*, filios ovium,) et armenti (*vel*, pecoris; *distinguit oves et arietes a bobus et vaccis.*) et erit anima eorum quasi hortus irriguus, et non adjicient ad dolendum (*vel*, lugendum) amplius.

He says that they would come to *sing praises on the height of Zion;* by which words Jeremiah promises the restoration

[1] The difference between the two verbs seems to be this: פדה is to rescue, to free, to deliver, either by force or by a ransom; but גאל is to recover what one has a right to, and this also either by force or by a ransom. So that the latter implies a claim or right which is not intimated by the former,—

For Jehovah will deliver Jacob,
And recover him from a hand stronger than his own.

Forcible deliverance is no doubt meant here; and the latter verb is very striking, as it implies that God was vindicating his own right in extricating Jacob from the grasp of a hand stronger than his own.—*Ed.*

of the Temple, for otherwise the return of the Jews to their own country would have been of no great importance; nay, it would have been better for them to have remained in Chaldea, if they only regarded quietness, wealth, and pleasures; for we know how great was the fertility and pleasantness of Chaldea. Then as to the benefits of an earthly and fading life, dwelling there would have been more advantageous to the Jews; but their return to their own country was to be looked for chiefly that they might be separated from heathens, and might rightly worship God, and so dwell in the promised inheritance, as to be strangers in the world, having respect to their celestial rest.

What then has been hitherto said of the people's return would have been unimportant, had not this promise been added respecting the restoration of God's worship. At the same time he exhorts the Israelites to gratitude by shewing to them the end for which they were to be made free, even that they might sing praises on the height of Zion. We, indeed, know that the Temple was built on the top of that hill. But the Prophet mentions the height or high place, because gratitude was freely expressed when the Jews returned to their own country; for while they lived in exile they were like persons mute. It is hence said in the Psalms, "How shall we sing a song to God in a foreign land?" (Ps. cxxxvii. 4.) And they might have been still fearful after their return, had not a full liberty been granted them. This then is the benefit which the Prophet refers to when he says, that they would celebrate this favour *on the high place of Sion*, not in an obscure corner, but so that their voice might be heard far and wide.

He adds, *and they shall flow together to the goodness of Jehovah, to the wheat, vine, and oil.*[1] This mode of speaking,

[1] The verb נָהַר, rendered here, "flow together," has another meaning, "to be enlightened" or illuminated, (see Ps. xxxiv. 5;) and light in Scripture means comfort, delight, or enjoyment. It is so taken by the *Syriac* and the *Targ.*, and more suitably to the words which follow than in the sense here given,—

And they shall be comforted by the bounty of Jehovah,
With corn, and with new wine, and with oil,
Also with the young of the flock and of the herd;

common among the Prophets, ought to be specially noticed. They describe the kingdom of Christ in a way suitable to the comprehension of a rude people, and hence they set before them external images; for when Christ's kingdom is the subject, mention is made of gold, of silver, of every kind of wealth, and also of great splendour and of great power, for we know that what is beyond and above the world cannot be immediately comprehended by the human mind. We are here inclosed, as it were, in prisons—I speak not of our bodies; but while we sojourn on earth, we cannot raise our minds upwards so as to penetrate as far as the celestial glory of God. As, then, the kingdom of Christ is spiritual and celestial, it cannot be comprehended by human minds, except he raises up our thoughts, as he does, by degrees. This, then, is the reason why the Prophets have set forth the kingdom of Christ by comparing it to earthly kingdoms. We also know that there was a peculiarity in the Old Testament, when God covered with shadows what was afterwards clearly revealed in the Gospel; in Christ the heavens are opened to us. Hence this form of stating the truth would now be not only superfluous to us, but even injurious, as it would draw us back from the enjoyment of heavenly things. For we ought to distinguish between our state and that of the ancient people. Paul reminds us that they were children under a schoolmaster, being under the Law; but that we are grown up, and that, therefore, the bondage under which the Fathers lived, has come to an end through the coming of Christ. (Gal. iii. 23-25.)

Though David was endued with a singular gift of the Spirit, yet he confined himself within his own limits; for he knew that God intended so to rule at that time his Church, as that the manner of teaching should be suitable to children. But now, after we have grown up in Christ, the figures and external images have ceased; for though godliness has promises respecting the present as well as the future life, as Paul testifies, (1 Tim. iv. 8;) we ought yet to rise above

> And their soul shall be like a watered garden,
> And they shall again hunger no more.
>
> *Or,*
>
> And they shall again feel want no more.—*Ed.*

that doctrine which is elementary. Hence when the Prophets promise wine, and oil, and wheat to the faithful, their object is to raise up their minds by degrees and gradually to higher things, according to the condition and comprehension of childhood.

And this ought to be carefully noticed; for many profane men, when they read such sentences, think that the people were addicted only to present gratifications, and that all the Jews were slaves to their appetites, and were fed by God like swine or oxen. But such an opinion is to be altogether abhorred; for they who entertain it not only wrong the Fathers most grievously, whose hope was the same as ours, as thy ever looked forward to an eternal inheritance, being strangers, as the Apostle tells us, in this world, (Heb. xi. 13;) but they also disunite the body of the Church, and extinguish the grace of God, which was granted formerly through many ages, though it was only at the coming of Christ that God commenced to proclaim to men his eternal salvation. But we must bear in mind that the holy Fathers were not so brutish in their minds, that they confined their thoughts to this world; for they knew that they had been adopted by God, that they might at last enjoy a celestial life; and hence they called themselves sojourners. Jacob, who had long dwelt in the land of Canaan, says that his whole life had been a continual pilgrimage. (Gen. xlvii. 9.) And the Apostle wisely notices this, when he says that they were acknowledged by God as his children, because they were strangers in this world. (Heb. xi. 13.) Then the holy fathers had the same hope as we now receive from the Gospel, as they had also the same Christ. But the difference is, that God then set forth his grace under visible figures, and it was, therefore, more obscure, but that now, figures and types had ceased, and Christ has come forth and appeared to us more clearly. I have therefore said, that this doctrine ought to be wisely applied to our use, lest we seek to be fed and crammed when God invites us to the participation of his grace. But we ought to know, that of all men, we are the most miserable, if our hope is confined to this world; and yet, at that time this way of teaching was very neces-

sary, for the return of the people, as it has been stated, required it.

Now, then, let us know that by saying, *they shall flow together to the goodness of Jehovah, to wine, oil, and wheat,* something better and more excellent than food and sufficiency is promised, and that what is spiritual is conveyed under these figures, that the people might, by degrees, ascend to the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which was as yet involved in shadows and obscurity.

He afterwards adds, *their soul shall be as a watered garden.* He intimates that their abundance would be perpetual. When a fruitful year happens, fruits then, indeed, abound, and the quantity of wine and wheat is more than the demand; but after a fertile year sterility follows, which absorbs the previous abundance; and so it often happens, because men through their ingratitude, as it were, drive away God's blessing, so that it does not flow to them in a continuous course; but God promises here that the souls of the people would be as watered gardens, because they were not to be satisfied only for a short time, but were at no time to be exposed to want, or famine, or to any deficiency.

He says further, *they shall again mourn no more.* He confirms the same thing by using various forms of expression; but what he substantially means is, that when God's people were made free, God's blessing would be continued to them, so that the faithful would not be subject to the common miseries of men.[1] For we know what our condition is in this world, for every hour, nay, almost every moment, our joy is turned into sorrow, and our laughter into tears. But God promises here that he would be so propitious to his Church, that it would have a perpetual cause for rejoicing. Now, how this comes to pass we do not easily comprehend; for though God in Christ has plainly unfolded to us the treasures of celestial life, yet we always creep on the earth. Hence it comes that we do not attain what is contained in

[1] The verb דָּאַב, here used, does not mean to mourn or to "sorrow," though this is the idea given to it by the *Targ.* It is rendered "hunger," by the *Sept.* and *Vulg.* According to *Parkhurst*, its real meaning is, "to faint or fail through weariness, hunger, or terror." *Blayney* renders, "pine for hunger." See the previous note.—*Ed.*

these sentences which speak of the true and real happiness of the godly. However, we ought, in the main, to regard our joy as perpetual; for whatever evils may happen to us, yet God shines on us by his grace, and thus all things turn out for our good, and are aids to our salvation, as Paul tells us in Rom. viii. 28. And thus we cease not to glory in distresses and afflictions, as he also teaches us in the fifth chapter; and we dare to triumph over cold and heat, over nakedness and all other evils, and even over death itself.

But we must bear in mind that Christ's kingdom only begins in us here, and in the rest of the world; it is, then, no wonder that we taste so little of the benefits which the Prophets extol in such high terms. When, therefore, a temptation of this kind creeps in, when God treats us more sharply then we desire, "What does this mean? Wert thou one of God's children, would he not deal with thee indulgently as he has promised? Where is that abundance of wheat, wine, and oil, for thou art often in want? Thou always livest in penury, nor does there appear to be anything better for thee to-morrow, as thou art now robbed and art come to a barren country,"—now when such a temptation as this creeps in, such as may draw thee to despair, let this doctrine come to thy mind, "Is the kingdom of God made perfect in thee?" Now if not one of us has hardly entered into God's kingdom, there is no wonder that we are not partakers of all the good things which God has promised to his people; for if Christ's kingdom is weak and feeble in us, it is nothing but right that we should live, as it were, in that penury which tempts us to distrust God; the same is the way with the whole world. There is, then, no reason to wonder that God does not fulfil what he has promised under Christ's kingdom, when men are not capable of receiving so great a kindness; for it is written, "Open thy mouth and I will fill it." (Ps. lxxxi. 10.) But we are straitened in ourselves; hence it is, that hardly the smallest drops of God's bounty come to us. It afterwards follows,—

13. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their

13. Tunc lætabitur virgo (*aut* puella) in choro et adolescentes (*vel*, electi; *sed significat proprie adoles-*

mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

centes,) et senes pariter; et convertam luctum eorum in gaudium, et consolabor eos et exhilarabo a suo dolore.

This is a confirmation of the former verse; for he says that joy would be in common to young women and young men, and also to the old. He had spoken of the perpetuity of joy; but he now extends this joy to both sexes, women and men, and to all ages. Of the *dance* we have spoken elsewhere,—that wantonness in which the world indulges in its hilarity, was not permitted; as to profane men, there is no moderation in their joy. The Prophets followed the common mode of speaking; and, indeed, the Israelites had their dances while celebrating the praises of God; but it was a chaste and modest joy, yea, and a sacred joy, for it was a mode of worshipping God. Yet the Prophet speaks according to the common practices of the people, as in many other places, when he says that young women and young men would *rejoice in the dance.*

He then adds, *I will turn their mourning to joy, I will console them and exhilarate them from their grief.*[1] Here the Prophet averts the thoughts of the Israelites from the evils they then had, lest their grief should so darken their minds as to prevent them to taste of God's goodness promised them. That the feeling, then, of present evils might not hinder them to come to God and receive his favour, he speaks of their grief and mourning, and intimates that the change would be easily made by God's hand, when it pleased him to deliver his people and restore them to their former state, so that their complete happiness would take place under the reign of Christ.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are still in our state of pilgrimage, and as thou makest us partakers of thy goodness, according as

[1] This clause may be rendered thus,—

For I will turn their mourning into rejoicing,
And I will comfort them and cheer them above their sorrow.

That is, "I will give them comfort and joy more than the sorrow which they have had." The preposition מן, has often the meaning of *above* or *more than.* See Deut. xiv. 2. Their sorrow had been great, but the promise here is, to give them in proportion a comfort and a joy still greater.—*Ed.*

thou knowest to be necessary for us,—O grant, that we, being ever reminded by thy benefits, may aspire to higher things, and may, through all the temptations with which we must contend, advance towards the goal set before us, looking for that perfect felicity in heaven, of which a few sparks only now shine before our eyes, and thus carry on a warfare under the banner of thy Son, so as not to doubt but that a triumph is prepared for us in that blessed life which has been obtained by his blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twentieth.

14. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord.

14. Et satiabo animam sacerdotum pinguedine, et populus meus beneficentia mea salvabitur, dicit Jehova.

This verse is connected with the former; for what the Prophet had said generally of the whole people, he now distinctly declares respecting the priests, for they were, as it were, the heart of the people; and by this order God gave a lively representation of his favour. This is the reason why the Scripture, in setting forth God's blessing to his chosen people, speaks especially of the priests, as it appears from many places. Then the Prophet intimates that God would be bountiful indiscriminately to all the Israelites, but that his peculiar favour would be conspicuous towards the priests, for the condition of the people would not be complete without the priesthood, for the priesthood was, as it were, the soul. They would have lived like the heathens, had not God prescribed how he was to be called upon and worshipped. And having mentioned the priests, he does not confine himself to them, but the favour of God is extended to the whole people. It is not then only of the priests that the Prophet speaks, but he declares that the people would be made blessed through God's bounty, and yet that his peculiar kindness would be manifested towards the Levitical priests, according to what we read in the Psalms: a special blessing is promised to the priests, accompanied with felicity to the godly; and David, when felicitating himself on having so many of God's blessings, by which he was distinguished, does indeed mention the provisions of his table [illegible] abun-

dance of all other things, yet he immediately adds, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord." (Psalm xxiii. 6, 7.) By this conclusion, he intimates, that he esteemed as nothing what profane men desire, except he enjoyed as the first thing the worship of God; for this is the main part of our happiness. For wherefore do we live, except we learn, while we partake of blessings from God's hand, that he is our Father, and that we are stimulated by his bounty to worship him, and except we surrender ourselves wholly to his word?

We now, then, perceive the Prophet's object in saying, that the priests would be satiated *with fatness.*

As the word דשן, *deshin*, fatness, denotes abundance of all things; so *satiate* intimates the great extent of God's bounty. Some render it "inebriate," but improperly; and it would be inappropriate to say, "I will inebriate with fatness." But רוה, *rue*, means to irrigate and also to satiate: hence the Prophet said, in what we considered yesterday, that the soul of the faithful would be like a watered garden; it is there רוה, *rue*. So also now God means, that he would be so bountiful towards his people, that nothing would be wanting to the full affluence of all good things. And he again says the same thing with regard to the whole people, *My people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith Jehovah.* We hence see that nothing is promised to the priests except in connection with the whole Church. It follows—

15. Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, *and* bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they *were* not.

16. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

15. Sic dicit Jehova, Vox in excelso audita est, lamentatio, fletus amaritudinum, Rachel plorans super filiis suis noluit (renuit, *vel*, non admisit) ad consolandum (*hoc est*, non admisit consolationem super filiis suis,) quia non ipsi, (*hoc est*, quia non sunt.)

16. Sic dicit Jehova, Prohibe vocem tuam a fletu et oculos tuos a lachrymis, quia erit merces operi tuo, dicit Jehova, et revertentur è terra hostis.

Here, in the first place, the Prophet describes the desolation of the land, when deprived of all its inhabitants; and, in the second place, he adds a comfort,—that God would

restore the captives from exile, that the land might again be inhabited. But there is here what they call a personification, that is, an imaginary person introduced: for the Prophet raises up Rachel from the grave, and represents her as lamenting. She had been long dead, and her body had been reduced to ashes; but the discourse has more force when lamentation is ascribed to a dead woman than if the Prophet had said, that the land would present a sad and a mournful appearance, because it would be waste and desolate; for rhetoricians mention personification among the highest excellencies, and Cicero, when treating of the highest ornament of an oration, says, that nothing touches an audience so much as when the dead are raised up from below. The Prophet, then, though not taught in the school of rhetoricians, thus adorned his discourse through the impulse of God's Spirit, that he might more effectually penetrate into the hearts of the people.

And this personification introduces a scene, for it brings before us the Jews and the other Israelites; nor does it only represent to them the calamity that was at hand, and what had already in part happened, but it also sets before their eyes the vengeance of God which had taken place in the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, when first four tribes were driven into exile, and afterwards the whole kingdom was destroyed, and it also sets forth what the Jews little thought of and did not fear, even the extreme calamity and ruin of the kingdom of Judah, and of the holy city.

Hence he says, *Thus saith Jehovah, A voice on the height is heard, even lamentation, the weeping of bitterness.* He introduces God as the speaker; for the Jews, though they had seen the dreadful scattering of their brethren, were yet remaining secure; and hence another Prophet complains, that no one laid to heart the calamity of Joseph. (Amos vi. 6.) They saw that the whole land was almost consumed by God's vengeance, as though a fire had raged everywhere; and yet they followed their own gratifications, as Isaiah also accuses them. (Isa. xxii.) This is the reason why God is made to speak here: he had to do with men altogether torpid and heedless. That the Prophet then might awaken them from

their torpor, he introduces God as making the announcement, *A voice* then *is heard*,—whose voice? of *Rachel*.

Interpreters think that Rachel is mentioned, because she was buried in Bethlehem: but as to Joseph, that is, his posterity, this region had come by lot, it seems to me probable that the Prophet here refers not to the grave of Rachel, but to her offspring; for that part which they who descended from her son Benjamin had obtained, was laid waste; hence he introduces Rachel as the mother of that part of the country; and it is well known that under the tribe of Ephraim is included the other ten tribes: but the reference to her burial is without meaning. *Rachel*, then, *weeping for her children, refused consolation, because they were not*;[1] that is, she could not receive consolation, for a reason was wanting, as her posterity were destroyed, and were become extinct in the land.

This passage is quoted by Matthew, (chap. ii. 18,) where he gives an account of the infants under two years old, who had been slain by the command of Herod: then he says, that this prophecy was fulfilled, even that Rachel again wept for her children. But the explanation of this is attended with no difficulty; for Matthew meant no other thing than that the same thing happened at the coming of Christ as had taken place before, when the whole country was reduced to desolation; for it was the Evangelist's object to remove an offence arising from novelty, as we know that men's minds feel a dread when anything new, unexpected, and never heard of before happens. Hence, the Evangelists often direct their attention to this point, so that what happened in the time of Christ might not terrify or disturb the minds of men as a thing new and unexpected, inasmuch as the fathers formerly had experienced the same. To no purpose then do interpreters torture themselves by explaining this passage allegorically; for Matthew did not intend

[1] "To be not," according to the usage of the Scripture, means either dead or absent. See Gen. xlii. 36. Joseph was not, he being dead; and Simeon was not, he being absent in Egypt. To be not here refers to the absent, those driven into exile; but the passage, as quoted by Matthew, refers to such as were dead. The similarity was only in part, that is, as to the weeping.—*Ed.*

to lessen the authority of ancient history, for he knew in what sense this had been formerly said ; but his only object was to remind the Jews that there was no cause for them to be greatly astonished at that slaughter, for that region had formerly been laid waste and bereaved of all its inhabitants, as though a mother, having had a large family, were to lose all her children.[1]

We now then see how Matthew accommodated to his own purpose this passage. He retains the proper name, "Ramah," and there was a place so called ; but the appellative is preferable here, "A voice is heard on the height," as we had yesterday, "on the height of Zion." Then a high place is what Jeremiah has mentioned here, because lamentation was to be heard through all parts of the country, for a voice sent forth from a high place sounds afar off.[2] Now, also, we perceive the meaning of this sentence,—that the country possessed by the sons of Benjamin had been reduced to desolation, so that the mother, as one bereaved of her children, pined away in her lamentation, as nothing could afford her comfort, because her whole offspring had been cut off.

Now follows a promise which moderates the grievousness of the calamity. And the two verses ought to be read as opposite the one to the other, "Though Rachel, weeping for her children, has no ground for consolation for a time, yet God will console her." And thus the Prophet, in the former verse, exhorts the Jews to repentance, but in the latter to hope: for it was necessary that the Jews should be forewarned of their dreadful calamity, that they might acknowledge God's judgment ; and it was also necessary for them to have their minds inspired with hope. Now, then, the Prophet bids them to be comforted ; for Rachel, having long bewailed her children without any consolation, would at length obtain God's mercy. God then would console Rachel after her long lamentation.

[1] The quotation in Matthew is neither from the Hebrew nor from the *Sept.* It is substantially correct, but not verbally ; the sense and not the words, seems to have been chiefly regarded by the Apostles.—*Ed.*

[2] "Ramah" is found in the *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Targ.* ; but "on the height," or, on high, is the *Vulg.* It seems better to retain the proper name, "Ramah."—*Ed.*

Refrain, he says, *thy voice from weeping.* The word is בכה, *beke:* as he had mentioned this word before in the second place, "lamentation, the weeping of bitterness," so he now repeats the same here, "Refrain thy voice from weeping," that is, cease to complain and to bewail the death of thy children, *and thine eyes from tears.* The meaning is, that the lamentation of Rachel would not be perpetual. We have said that a dead woman is introduced, but that this is done for the sake of solemnity and effect, so that the Jews, having the matter set as it were before their eyes, might be more touched and moved. But if we wish to understand the meaning of the Prophet without a figure, it is this,—that the lamentation would not be perpetual, because the exiles would return, and that the land that had fallen to the lot of the children of Benjamin and of Joseph would again be inhabited.

And he says, *for reward shall be to thy work.* He means that the sorrow of Rachel would at length happily come to an end, so as to produce some benefit. While the faithful, according to Isaiah, were complaining that they were oppressed with grief without hope, they said, "We have been in travail, and brought forth wind:" by these words they meant that they had experienced the heaviest troubles; and then they added, "without fruit," as though a woman were in travail and suffered the greatest pain and anguish, and brought forth no living, but a dead child, which is sometimes the case. Now a woman who gives birth to a living child rejoices, as Christ says, because a man is born, (John xvi. 21;) but when a woman after long pains brings forth a dead lump or something monstrous, it is an increase of sorrow. So the Prophet says, that the labour of Rachel, that is, of her country, would not be without fruit: *there shall* then *be a reward to thy work.* The Scripture uses the same way of speaking in 2 Chron. xv. 7, where the Prophet Azariah speaks to the King Asa, "Act manfully, and let not your hands be weakened, for there shall be a reward to your work." Then by work is to be understood trouble or sorrow, and by reward a joyful and prosperous issue. The meaning is, that though the whole country mourned miser-

ably for a time, being deserted and bereaved of its inhabitants, yet the issue would be joyful, for the Lord would restore the exiles, so that the land would be like a mother having a numerous family, and delighting in her children, or in her offspring.

Now, were any one to apply this to satisfactions, he would be doing what is very absurd, as the Papists do, who say that by the punishment which we suffer we are redeemed from eternal death, and that then the vengeance of God is pacified, and satisfaction is made to his justice. But when the Prophet declares that there would be reward to the work, he does not commend the fruits of the punishment by which God chastised his people, as though they were, as they say, satisfactions; but he simply reminds them that their troubles and sorrows would not be useless, for a happier issue than the Jews hoped for would take place. But it is God's gratuitous gift that there is a reward to our work, that is, when the miseries and calamities which he inflicts on us are made aids to our salvation. For doubtless whatever evils we suffer, they are tokens of God's wrath; poverty, cold, famine, sterility, disease, and all other evils, are so many curses inflicted by God. When, therefore, there is a reward to our troubles and sorrows, that is, when they produce some benefit or fruit, it is as though God turned darkness into light; for naturally, as I have said, all these punishments are curses. But God promises that he will bless us, so that all these punishments shall turn out for our good and salvation, as Paul tells us in Rom. viii. 28.

Then he adds, *they shall return from the land of the enemy.* By these words he refers to the restoration of the people, so that Rachel would again see her posterity inheriting the promised land. But there is no reason refinedly to dispute here, whether Rachel rejoiced at the return of her offspring, or whether that calamity was lamented by her; for the Prophet's object was not to shew whether or not the dead are conscious of our affairs; but he speaks figuratively in order to render what he said more striking and forcible. It follows,—

17. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that *thy* children shall come again to their own border.

17. Et erit spes novissimo tuo, dicit Jehova; et redibunt filii ad terminum suum (*hoc est*, in regionem suam.)

He indeed explains in a few words, but with sufficient plainness, what he had said. We must always bear in mind the order which I have pointed out,—that he first placed before the Jews their calamity, that they might humble themselves before God; and then he gave them the hope of return, that they might feel assured that God would be propitious to them. He now includes both in these few words, *there shall be hope in thine end;* for they embrace the two clauses,—that the whole country would lament for a time, and then that their tears would be turned to laughter and their sorrow to joy: for had the happiness of the people flowed in one unbroken stream, the word, "end," would not have been suitable; for it refers to what terminates. There is then to be understood a contrast between the end and the beginning. In short, Jeremiah teaches here, that the grievous time, during which God would afflict his people, was to be borne patiently. But after having bidden them to continue in a state of suspense, he sets before them a happy issue.

Now this passage contains a useful doctrine,—that we are not to measure God's favour by present appearances, but learn to keep our minds and thoughts in suspense, while the Lord seems to be angry with us, and only disheartening terrors meet us, so that we may cherish in our hearts the hope which the Prophet exhorts us to entertain, and distinguish between our present state and the end. And on this account it is that the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, while exhorting the faithful to patience, says that the rod is always at the time grievous to children, but that correction appears useful, when the end is regarded. (Heb. xii. 11.) So when we perceive that God is displeased with us, we cannot but feel a dread, and we desire at the same time to escape from his chastening hand; but, as I have just said, we ought to direct our thoughts to the end or the issue, according to what we are taught here: *there shall* then *be hope in thine end.*[1]

[1] Or the words may be rendered, "There is a hope for thy posterity." So *Gataker*, not without reason, renders the words. The following clause explains what this "hope" was.—*Ed.*

But a question may be here moved, Was there no hope for the intermediate time, while God was punishing the Jews? the answer is obvious,—the Prophet takes hope here for hope accomplished. If any one calls it actual hope or hope effected, I do not object. But he doubtless intimates that all the calamities which the Jews would have to endure would at last end in their deliverance, and would be for their good. We thus see that hope here, as we have said, is to be taken for hope accomplished. And the Prophet explains himself, *they shall return to their own border.* Here by stating a part for the whole he mentions *border* for the whole country, as though he had said, "Ye are now far off from your country, but you shall again return to that land which has been marked out by certain limits, even by Euphrates, Egypt, the sea and Arabia;" for these were the four borders. It afterwards follows,—

18. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself *thus;* Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed *to the yoke:* turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou *art* the Lord my God.

18. Audiendo audivi Ephraim transmigrantem, (*vel*, cum transmigravit, *vel*, lamentantem, *ut alii vertunt; dicemus postea de voce;*) Castigasti me, et castigatus sum tanquam vitulus non edoctus; converte me et convertar, quia tu Jehova Deus meus.

The Prophet here speaks more distinctly of a blessed issue, and shews that the punishment by which God had already chastised the people, and by which he was prepared to chastise the tribe of Judah, was wholly necessary, which he would give them as a medicine. For as long as we have set before us the wrath of God, we necessarily, as it has been already said, try to avoid it, because we wish well to ourselves, and endeavour to remove to a distance, as much as we can, whatever is adverse to us: hence the punishment which God inflicts is never pleasant to us, our sorrow in evils and adversities is never mitigated, nor do we quietly submit to God, unless we direct our minds to the fruit which distresses and chastisements bring forth. We now then perceive the object of the Prophet: the Jews always murmured and said, "Why does not God spare and forgive us? why does he not deal more gently with us?" The Prophet therefore shews, that God had a regard to the wellbeing of his

people in chastising them; for had he indulged them in their sins, their pride and perverseness would have increased.

The intention then of these words is this, and it is for this end the Prophet speaks,—that the Jews might know that all their punishment, which would have been otherwise bitter and grievous, was a sort of medicine, by which their spiritual diseases were to be healed.

He therefore says, *Hearing I have heard Ephraim, after having transmigrated,* &c. The participle מִתְנוֹדֵד, *metnudad,* is in *Hithpael,* and comes from נוֹד, *nud,* or from נָדַד, *nedad.* Some render it, "transmigrating," and others, "lamenting." But נוֹד, *nud,* means to move, to wander, to migrate from one place to another; it means also to complain, to tell of adversities, though it is often applied to those whose object is to solace the miserable and the mournful. If any one prefers the rendering, "I have heard Ephraim lamenting," I do not object, for there is a sufficient probability in its favour. But it may also be derived from נוֹד, *nud,* as well as from נָדַד, *nedad;* the most suitable sense would then be, "after having moved into exile," or literally, "after having transmigrated," that is, after God had driven Ephraim, even the ten tribes, into exile.[1]

After Ephraim then had thus transmigrated, or had been driven into exile, he then began to say, *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastened, for I was an untamed bullock: Turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou, Jehovah, art my God.*[2] The Prophet, no doubt, as I said before, meant here to check the murmurs which prevailed among the Jews, who said, that God was too rigid and severe. He shews not only that they were worthy of the very grievous punishment they were

[1] The idea of "transmigrating" is alone given by the *Vulg.*, the other versions and the *Targ.* have "lamenting:" and the latter is more consonant with the context, and has been adopted by almost all modern commentators. It is used in ch. xv. 5, in the sense of being moved or affected for another, of sympathizing or condoling. It is there in its simple form, that is, in *Kal.* As it is here in *Hithpael,* its meaning is, self-condoling, or condoling himself,—an idea which is very expressive, and is more fully explained in the next verse.—*Ed.*

[2] This is no doubt the right rendering, and not, "Thou art Jehovah my God." So in the first commandment, the version ought to be, "I Jehovah," or, I the Lord, "am thy God." The meaning is not, that he is Jehovah, but that he who is Jehovah is our God.—*Ed.*

suffering, but also that it was a testimony of God's favour, that he thus intended to cleanse them from their sins; for they would have a hundred times grown putrid in their wickedness, had not God thus reduced them to a sound mind. He at the same time sets forth Ephraim as an example, that the Jews might resignedly follow their brethren, and not discontentedly bear their exile, seeing that it had already been profitable to their brethren. When therefore they perceived that their punishment was useful to the Israelites, and brought forth good fruit, they ought to have submitted themselves willingly to God, and not to have murmured against him for punishing them for their sins, but to have borne their exile as a paternal correction.

Then he says, "I have heard Ephraim,"—at what time? This circumstance ought to be especially noticed, it was after he had *transmigrated*. When they were quiet in the land, they were, as it follows, like untameable steers. The Prophets also use this mode of speaking, when they describe the Israelites before their dispersion; they call them fat and well fed oxen: affluence produced luxury, and luxury pride. Thus, then, they kicked, as it were, against God, according to what is said by Moses, "My people having grown fat kicked." (Deut. xxxii. 15.) As they were such, it was necessary that they should be tamed. And to this refers the time that is mentioned: when Ephraim was forcibly driven from his own country, then he began to acknowledge his evils and to be touched with a penitent feeling; "Thou hast chastised me," he says, "and I was instructed." The verb יסר, *iser*, means to instruct as well as to chastise, and is applied to princes, counsellors, fathers, and magistrates. The word chastise is more restricted in Latin. But יסר, *iser*, properly means to teach, and yet often it means to chastise, for that is one way of teaching or instructing. He then says that he was chastised, though in a different sense: in the first clause, when he says, "Thou hast chastised me," he refers to the punishment by which God had humbled his people; and in the second clause he says, "I was instructed," that is, "I begin now at length to become wise;" for it is the wisdom even of fools, not to become hardened

under their calamities; for they who become hardened are altogether in a hopeless state. It is the chief part of wisdom to acknowledge what is right, and willingly to follow it; but, except we be willing to regard our own good, God will then chastise us.[1]

When our diseases are healable, we turn to God; but the perversely wicked bite and champ the bridle, and contend with God's judgment. But the Prophet here refers to the faithful alone; for punishment has not the same effect on all indiscriminately. God, indeed, calls all men by punishment to repentance, so that even the reprobate are without excuse when they harden their hearts, and profit not under the rod. But punishment is peculiarly useful to the faithful; for God not only scourges them, but also, by his Spirit, bends their minds to docility, so that they willingly suffer themselves to be corrected by him. Hence I said that this clause properly refers to the faithful, when the Prophet says that Ephraim was *instructed*, after having been warned by punishment, to turn himself to God.

He compares himself to an untameable steer; for steers are wanton before they are habituated to the yoke. Such also is the wantonness of men before God subdues them by various kinds of punishment, and not only subdues them, but renders them also tractable and submissive. Next week I shall lecture instead of Beza.

[1] The *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* favour this view of a different sense of the same verb in the second clause. The *Sept.* retain the same meaning. There is no need of altering the sense; indeed, another sense does not so well comport with the passage. He says that God had chastised him, and that he was chastised as an untamed, or rather untrained steer or bullock, implying that he was compelled to bear the yoke, and also that he had been brought to submit to it: hence the prayer that follows, "turn," or rather, restore, &c. The verb יסר means to correct rather than to chastise, even to correct by the rod, or by the goad; and then to teach as the effect of correction,—

Thou hast corrected me;
Yea, I was corrected like a steer, not trained:
Restore thou me, and I shall be restored;
For thou, Jehovah, art my God.

After a confession with regard to correction, a confession that intimates that it had its proper effect, a prayer for restoration seems suitable, and that prayer is founded on the fact that Jehovah was their God.—*Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are always carried away by our own vanities, and as the licentiousness and insolence of our flesh are such that we never follow thee and submit to thy will,—O grant, that we may profit more and more under thy scourges, and never perversely harden ourselves, but learn to know that even when thou appearest rigid, thou hast a regard for our salvation, so that we, turning to thee, may strive during the rest of our life to glorify thy name through thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-First.

In the last lecture, the Prophet told us that Ephraim, until he had been chastised by God's hand, was like an untamed bullock, and that, therefore, exile was useful to him. He now adds, *Turn me, and I shall be turned.*

This second clause seems not to be in accordance with the former; for the Israelites had before confessed that they had turned, and now they pray God to turn them. Why is this said? For it seems useless to ask for what we have already obtained. But the solution is obvious. It may first be answered, that men never so repent but that they have need of the continual aid of God; for we must be renewed from day to day, and by degrees renounce the lusts of our flesh; nor is it in one day that we put off the old man. And when the Prophet in the Psalms speaks of the deliverance of the people, he says that it was a miracle, that the people had been restored beyond all hope; "We were," he says, "like those who dream;" he afterwards adds, "Turn our captivity, O Lord," (Ps. cxxvi. 1, 4;) and this he said because God had restored but a small number. The same also happens as to spiritual turning, both with regard to the whole body and to individual members. We turn, as I have already said, by little and little to God, and by various steps; for repentance has its progress. There is, therefore, nothing improper when we say that the Prophet, in the name of the ten tribes, asks God to go on with his work. But as this explanation is rather strained, I prefer a simpler view of the words, "Turn me, and I shall be turned." They mean the same thing as though the Prophet had said, "O Lord, this is

thy work." He does not then simply refer to a future time, but speaks of God's favour, as though he had said, that men do not turn by their own impulse, but that God, by the hidden power of his Spirit, turns them.

The Israelites had before confessed that they had been profitably chastised by God's hand, because punishment had instructed them; but now he adds that this was the singular kindness of God. But, as we before observed, punishment is what the elect and the reprobate have in common; but the end and fruit of punishment is far different; for the reprobate become more and more hardened, the very reverse of being submissive to God; but the elect are subdued, for God not only smites them with his rods, but also tames them within, subdues their pride, and, in a word, bends their hearts to obedience by his Spirit.

We now then understand the purpose of the Prophet: for in the name of the people, he first confesses that punishment, inflicted by God, had been useful, and secondly, he adds, that it was not through the power of men that they willingly returned to a right mind, but that God had bent their hearts by his Spirit, so that they did not become hardened by punishment, nor obstinately resisted, as the case most commonly is. We hence, then, conclude that repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit. God, indeed, invites us, and even urges us by external means to repent; for what is the design of punishment, but to lead us to repentance? But we must still remember that were God only to chastise us, it would have no other effect than to render us inexcusable, for our perverseness could never in this way be corrected. It is, then, necessary to add the second favour, that is, that God should subdue us within, and restore us to obedience. This the Prophet testifies when he says, "Turn me, and I shall be turned," as though he had said, that men indeed turn when God reminds them of their sins, but that they do this not by their own power, for it is the peculiar work of God.

He therefore adds, *For thou, Jehovah, art my God.* By this clause he intimates that God favours only his elect with this privilege; as though he had said, that it does not happen to all indiscriminately that they repent and submit to

God when he punishes them for their sins, but that it is a benefit peculiar to his chosen people. We ought then especially to notice the reason by which the Prophet confirms the previous sentence, for we hence learn the manifest difference there is between the elect and the reprobate; for some rebel and kick against the goads, and obstinately rush headlong into ruin, but others calmly and quietly submit to God: the reason is, because some are reprobate and the others are the elect. It now follows,—

19. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon *my* thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

19. Quia postquam convertisti me, pœnituit me, et postquam cognitus sum mihi (*vel*, ostensum fuit mihi, *vel*, agnovi meipsum) percussi femur meum; pudefactus sum, atque etiam confusus, quia tuli opprobrium adolescentiæ meæ.

Jeremiah now proceeds with what he had before briefly touched upon, even to shew that the punishment inflicted on the Israelites had not been without its fruit. And this is a doctrine which ought especially to be known, for we always shun whatever is hard to the flesh; so that if it were according to our own will, the chastisements of God would never be well received by us. It is, therefore, necessary to regard the end, as the Apostle reminds us. (Heb. xii. 11.) Now when we see that God has a regard for our own salvation while handling us somewhat roughly, our sorrow is mitigated and lessened, especially when experience proves that punishment is good for us; we then felicitate ourselves, and give thanks to God that he has not suffered us wholly to perish in our sins. This is the reason why the Prophet enlarges on this doctrine.

He therefore says, *After thou hast turned me, I repented.* He confirms what he has already said, that it is the peculiar work of God when a sinner repents, and that it cannot be ascribed to human powers, as though men could of themselves turn to the right way. But how was this done? *After thou hast turned me.* He thus repeats in other words what he had said, but for the purpose of confirming his previous declaration. The meaning is, that we are never touched by a serious feeling, so as to be displeased with our sins, until God himself turns us.

We hence learn how blind the Papists are, who, speaking of repentance, hold that man, through his own free-will, returns to God; and on this point is our greatest contest with them at this day. But the Prophet briefly determines the whole question; for, as he had said before, that men cannot turn except God turns them, he now adds, that he had found this to be really the fact, that people had never become conscious of their sins though God had grievously punished them until they were turned, not by their own free-will, but by the hidden working and influence of the Holy Spirit; *after thou hast turned me, I repented.* The meaning is, that men never entertain a real hatred towards sin, unless God illuminates their minds and changes their hearts; for what is the turning or conversion of which the Prophet speaks? It is the renewal of the mind and heart. For let its definition be fetched, as they say, from what is contrary to it; what is turning away? It is the alienation of the mind and heart from God. It then follows that when we turn we are converted, we are renewed in knowledge, and then in heart, or in our affections; both of which the Prophet ascribes to the grace of God, for he says that the people repented not of their sins until they were turned or converted, that is, until they were renewed both in mind and heart. Some give this version, "After I received consolation;" but their mistake is easily confuted by the context; for it immediately follows, *I was ashamed and also confounded.* There is no doubt then but that here is set forth the displeasure at sin that is felt when the sinner is terrified by God's judgment so as to renounce his vices.

After I was made known to myself, or, after it was shewn to me, or, simply, after I knew it, &c. For we may take the meaning to be, After it was given to Ephraim to know himself, or, after he knew himself. Some give this version, "After I was known;" and so the meaning would be the same with those words of Paul, "After ye have known God, or rather are known by him." (Gal. iv. 9.) But I fear that this exposition is too refined. I therefore would rather follow those who give this rendering, After I became known to myself, or, after the thing was made known to me. The Pro-

phet, no doubt, commends here the grace of God, because the veil had been taken away from the eyes of the people, or because they had been cured of their blindness; as though they had said, that they had long been blind, because they took delight in their vices, and their whole soul was in a torpid state; for we know that those who are forsaken by God are wholly insensible, and are as it were like the beasts. Then the people of Israel confess that they were, for a time, thus stupid, and that their minds were blinded: they therefore acknowledge here the grace of God, that he had at length opened their eyes. For they do not speak here, as we have said, of their virtue or power, but acknowledge that it proceeded wholly from God's gratuitous favour that they repented.

As then, under the word, turning or conversion, is included the renewal of the whole soul, so now it is expressly said, that they were endued with a right mind, because God had taken away the veil by which their eyes were covered, and had conferred on them new light. The meaning is, that they were not touched by the true fear of God before they were endued with a right mind; but at the same time he testifies that it had been obtained through the peculiar favour of God. We hence see that the Prophet, in the name of the ten tribes, acknowledges that nothing depended on the free-will of man, but that a sound mind and a right feeling of the heart is the work of the Holy Spirit.[1]

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The *smiting of the thigh* means sorrow or grief, which arises from the fear of God: for as long as we disregard God's judgment, Satan must necessarily fascinate us with his allurements; but when God manifestly shews that he is our judge, and when our own baseness comes to view, then we begin to *smite the thigh*. And he adds, what means the same thing, *I was ashamed and even confounded*. I wonder why many interpreters have omitted the particle גַּם, *gam*, even: they invert the order, and render thus, "I was confounded and ashamed." But the particle shews that the Prophet enhances the greatness of the sorrow and shame when he says, *I was ashamed and even confounded*.

He then adds, *Because I have borne the reproach of my youth*. He here repeats what he had said before, even that punishment, sent from above, had done good to the Israelites. For except they had been thus made ashamed, they would have always taken delight in their vices; for we see that the wicked flatter and deceive themselves as long as God spares and shews forbearance towards them. Hence the Prophet, in the name of the people, says, that punishment had been profitable to him. But we must bear in mind what we have said, that this fruit altogether proceeds from the grace of God: for the reprobate, however dreadful the examples of vengeance which God may exhibit, still remain unbending, nor do they bear their own reproach, that is, confess that they have sinned. To bear reproach, then, is peculiar to the elect of God, who have been regenerated by his Spirit; for they understand the cause of their evils. When we see two diseased persons, one of whom is insane, and so is insensible as to his disease, and the other feels his sorrow, and is affected by it: in this case we see some difference. But we see another difference in others who are diseased; we may therefore suppose a third case, for it often happens, that he who

following line, "after my knowing," means evidently "after knowing myself."

The two verses contain the language of the penitent, praying for restoration to their own land: and two reasons are assigned for this prayer,—because Jehovah was their covenanted God,—and because they repented, for to such had restoration been promised: Hence *for* is used twice; it is therefore not right to render כִּי at the beginning of the 19th verse, verily or surely.—*Ed.*

is affected with sorrow, does not yet examine into its cause. He then who is healable is one who understands whence has arisen his disease, and so is ready to obey, and willing to adopt the necessary remedies. There are also many who rush headlong to their own ruin; some, indeed, feel their punishment to be bitter, but consider not the cause of it, that is, that they have provoked God's wrath: but they who are prepared to seek the restoration of health, well know how they have contracted their disease. Hence the Prophet here says, that they bore *their reproach*, for they not only felt their sorrow, but also considered its fountain, that is, that they had, by their sins, provoked the wrath of God.

By *youth* he metaphorically points out the time when the Israelites indulged in excesses; for we know how much ardour belongs to that age. In the aged there is more moderation; but the young intemperately indulge themselves. It is therefore a metaphorical expression, by which the Prophet intimates, that the Israelites had, for a time, been wanton against God, their petulance being not subdued, for, as he had said, they had been like untamed bullocks. It follows,—

20. *Is* Ephraim my dear son? *is he* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

20. An filius pretiosus mihi Ephraim? an filius oblectationum? tamen ex quo tempore loquutus sum de eo, recordando recordabor illius (אזכרנו, *vel*, quia à tempore loquutus sum cum eo, recordando recordabor illius; *dicemus postea de sensu*,) propterea sonuerunt viscera mea illi (*id est*, super ipsum,) miserando miserabor illius, dicit Jehova.

God here complains of the Israelites, because he had produced so little an effect on them by his great goodness: for the adoption with which he had favoured them was an immense benefit; but by their ingratitude they had in a manner annihilated that favour. God then here asks, what sort of people the Israelites had been. But a question makes a thing stronger; for he who asks a question shews that he speaks not of a thing uncertain, but the knowledge of which is so conspicuous that it cannot be denied. It is then the same as though he had said, that Ephraim was unworthy of any honour or esteem, and that he was no object of delight. We now then perceive what God means in the beginning of

the verse, even that the people were unworthy of any mercy, because they had abolished, as far as they could, the favour of adoption: for by the word *son*, he refers to that special favour, the covenant which he had made with the seed of Abraham.

In the first place, he calls him a son, בֵּן, *ben*, and then a child, יֶלֶד, *ilad*, which refers to his birth: but by these two names, God here intimates that they were to him a peculiar people, as he everywhere calls those his sons who were the descendants of Abraham; for circumcision was to them a symbol and pledge of the covenant; and so the time is a circumstance that ought to be noticed, because God does not shew here what the Israelites were before he had chosen them to be his people. But as I have already said, he charges them with ingratitude, since the time they had been adopted by him as his children. He then calls them sons, or children, by way of concession, and with regard to their adoption, as Jerusalem was called the holy city, because it was God's habitation. There is then a concession as to the name given to them. But he afterwards adds, that this *son* was not *precious*, that is, worthy of any honour, and that he was not an object of *delight;* as though he had said, that he was of a perverse and wicked disposition, so that he could not take any delight in him, as by another simile he complains in chapter ii. 21, as we have seen, that the Jews were become bitter to him, "My vine have I planted thee; why then art thou turned to me into bitterness?" So also now he says, that the Israelites were indeed his sons, but that they were evil-disposed sons, disobedient sons, sons who only vexed their father, who wounded his feelings, who filled him with sorrow.

He then adds, *For from the time I spake in him*, so it is literally. It is commonly agreed that these words are to be read with those which follow. "For from what time I spake;" and thus the relative אֲשֶׁר, *asher*, is to be understood; but literally it is, "For from the time I spake in him," בּוֹ, *bu*, or, as some render it, "concerning him;" but it may suitably be rendered "with him." Then they read, in connection with this, *Remembering I will yet remember him.*

This passage, on account of its brevity, is obscure, and therefore ambiguous; but the common opinion is this,—that though Ephraim was not a child of delight, yet God would be merciful towards him; and thus they take כִּי, *ki*, in an adversative sense, "notwithstanding," or yet: "Is Ephraim a precious son? Is he a child of delight? yet remembering I will still remember him;" as though he had said, that he would not be prevented by the people's wickedness, for he would still pity him according to his infinite goodness, or that his goodness would surpass their wickedness. This sense is plausible; yet it may be doubted whether this be the meaning. Some read the words, "From the time I spake concerning him," that is, while I now speak of him: but I know not whether this explanation can stand. I am therefore inclined to the opinion of those who refer this to threatenings, even that from the time God had spoken against Israel, he was yet ready to be reconciled to them, according to what is said by the Prophet Habakkuk, "In wrath wilt thou remember mercy." (Hab. iii. 2.) But this ought to be rather understood of the covenant, as though God had said, "From the time I spake with him, I will remember him;" that is, that he might shew the reason why he dealt so mercifully with the people. For as their wickedness and corruption were so great, a doubt might arise, "Can God still patiently endure them?" Here then our attention is called back to the fountain of gratuitous mercy, even that God would forgive his people, because he had once chosen them.

But still when I narrowly weigh everything, I think the meaning of the Prophet to be different. I therefore separate the two clauses, "From the time I spake with him," and, "Remembering I will yet remember him;" for the sentence is harsh, when we say, "From the time I spake with him," and then add, "I will yet remember him." But the exposition, the most suitable in my opinion, is this, "From the time I spake with him," (for בְּ means with,) that is, I desisted not continually to exhort him to repentance, and yet I effected nothing; notwithstanding I will still remember him; that is, "Though I have found this people very perverse, and though they have long given many proofs

going; so also it was with the Jews; they had made up their minds to remain in perpetual exile, they were not therefore solicitous about the road, so as to remember their journey. Therefore the Prophet says now, *Set up for thee titles*, or inscriptions; for those who travel anywhere, if they mean to return, know that such an inn was commodious, and also that there was so much distance between this town or city and that village, and in like manner, that the road was straight or turned more to one side than another. When therefore they think of a return, they attend to such things as these.

It is for this purpose that the Prophet says, *Set up for thee titles*, that is, that thou mayest assist thy memory, as travellers are wont to do, who intend to return by the same way. *Set up* then *for thee titles, and raise up for thee heaps*, or stones, which we call in our language *monioyes;* as though he had said, "Thou indeed hast hitherto thought that the way has been closed up against thee, so that thou art to return no more: but God will stretch forth his hand and restore thee to thy former state." We hence see that the similitude is taken from the common practice of men, but employed for this end, that the Jews might not despair of their restoration as they had previously done.[1]

He then says, *Apply thy heart*—he now explains himself —*apply thy heart to the footpath, to the way through which*

[1] Raise up for thyself heaps,
Fix for thyself pillars.

Instead of ציונים many copies read ציונים; see 2 Kings xxiii. 17; Ezek. xxxix 15. That תמרורים cannot mean "bitternesses," as rendered by the *Vulg.* and the *Targ.*, is evident from the verb that precedes it, which means to place, to set, to fix. תמר is the palm-tree; the word then means palm-tree pillars, or pillars straight and high as the palm-tree. The remainder of the verse is as follows,—

Set thy heart on the highway,
The way thou didst go;
Return, O virgin of Israel, return,
To thy cities ascend.

The word for "highway" means a raised road, a road prepared for travelling. The "virgin" here signifies one that is of an age to be married. When Israel repented, they were in a fit state to be united to God, as their husband. The last line is rendered according to the proposed emendation of *Houbigant* and approved by *Horsley*, עלה instead of אלה, which seems to have no meaning.—*Ed.*

phet, no doubt, commends here the grace of God, because the veil had been taken away from the eyes of the people, or because they had been cured of their blindness; as though they had said, that they had long been blind, because they took delight in their vices, and their whole soul was in a torpid state; for we know that those who are forsaken by God are wholly insensible, and are as it were like the beasts. Then the people of Israel confess that they were, for a time, thus stupid, and that their minds were blinded: they therefore acknowledge here the grace of God, that he had at length opened their eyes. For they do not speak here, as we have said, of their virtue or power, but acknowledge that it proceeded wholly from God's gratuitous favour that they repented.

As then, under the word, turning or conversion, is included the renewal of the whole soul, so now it is expressly said, that they were endued with a right mind, because God had taken away the veil by which their eyes were covered, and had conferred on them new light. The meaning is, that they were not touched by the true fear of God before they were endued with a right mind; but at the same time he testifies that it had been obtained through the peculiar favour of God. We hence see that the Prophet, in the name of the ten tribes, acknowledges that nothing depended on the free-will of man, but that a sound mind and a right feeling of the heart is the work of the Holy Spirit.[1]

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that they torment themselves, and, as it were, designedly contrive for themselves many inquietudes. Since then the Israelites were looking forward to what might happen, and could not entertain any hope as to their return, except when some appearance of hope was presented to them, the Prophet now on this account reproves them.

He first calls the *people disobedient* or rebellious, for they had often been terrified by threatenings, and God had also offered them the hope of pardon. As they had been perverse whenever God spared them, and as they had also rejected all his promises, the Prophet does not without reason call them disobedient or rebellious. And by *circuits* or wanderings, he means those vain speculations with which the unbelieving are wont to weary themselves; for the word means properly to go around. We may indeed take it in the sense of wandering, and it is the same thing: but as I have said, the Prophet most fitly gives the name of circuits to those crooked and tortuous speculations in which the unbelieving indulged. And there seems to be understood a contrast between the straight way set before them by God, and those circuitous courses in which miserable men entangle themselves, when they do not follow God, but are led astray by their own vain devices. Isaiah also makes use of the same similitude, for he says, that the people were carried away by their own inventions, so that they fruitlessly wearied themselves, because they did not proceed in the straight way. (Isa. lvii. 10.)[1]

We may hence deduce a useful doctrine,—that we are always within the boundary of safety, when we obey God and walk in the way set before us in his word; but that as soon as we turn aside from the right way, we are only drawn here

[1] The verb, rendered "going about," only occurs here in *Hithpael*, and once in *Kal*, Cant. v. 6; where it means to "withdraw," or recede, or turn aside. And this sense of withdrawing is what is given to it here both by the *Sept.*, the *Targ.*, and the *Syr.*; but it is the withdrawing from accepting the return offered. We may give this version,—

How long wilt thou decline, (*i.e.*, to return,) O daughter of the restoration?

She had been before exhorted to return in the previous verse: she is now blamed for her unwillingness, which seems to have arisen from fear, and a sense of weakness. Then comes in most appropriately what follows, if interpreted according to the explanation of *Calvin*. The verb שׁוּב, the root of הַמְשׁוֹבֵבָה, means more frequently to turn to, to return, than to turn away, to apostatize.—*Ed.*

and there through windings and strayings, so that our labour is at last useless and even ruinous.

We now then understand the meaning of the Prophet: as the unbelief of the people was, as it were, a sealed door, so that they did not receive God's promises as to their liberation and return, his purpose here was to correct this evil, and to reprove the Israelites for wandering and being disobedient.

He afterwards adds, *For behold Jehovah will create*—literally, has created; but the past tense is here to be taken for the future; and it serves to shew the certainty of a thing when he uses the past tense, as though he was speaking of a thing already done: *Jehovah* then has *created a new thing.* He intimates that the Israelites acted foolishly in estimating the promise of deliverance according to their own judgment of things, and the state of things as it appeared to them; for he says that the favour promised them would be wonderful, for this is what he means by a *new* thing, as though he had said, "Ye indeed judge, according to your usual manner, of what God promises to you, as to your return, but it will be a miracle; act not then perversely, by regarding the favour of God as the common order of nature, for God will surpass everything that is usual among men."

It ought also to be observed, that what Jeremiah said of the redemption of the people is to be extended to the eternal salvation of the Church; for God in a wonderful manner raises the dead, defends and preserves his Church, and succours her in her troubles. Whenever then the Scripture speaks of the state of the Church, we ought to ascend above the world, and above our own conceptions, and to realize the miracle which is hid from us.

Now follows the miracle, *A woman shall surround a man.* Christians, almost with one consent, explain this of the virgin Mary; and the "new thing," leads them to this opinion, and probably, also, they were anxious to lay hold on whatever might seem to refer to the mystery of our salvation. They, therefore, say that the *new thing* of which the Prophet speaks is the virgin carrying the infant Christ in her womb, and that he is called *man,* because he was full

of divine power, though he increased according to the flesh in stature, wisdom, and strength. All this is deservedly laughed at by the Jews; yet they themselves, as I think, do not rightly understand the meaning of the Prophet. They apply it to the people of Israel, because they were like a woman divorced from her husband. They then say, "A woman shall embrace a man after having been alienated from him, and prostituted herself to many adulterers." The Jews seem to think that they give the meaning of the Prophet; but I think otherwise, for there is here a comparison made between a woman and a man, which they do not consider. For the Prophet does not speak here simply of a man, but of a strong man; for the word גבר, *geber*, means a man who is brave or courageous. When, therefore, he compares a woman to a man, I doubt not but the Prophet means that the Israelites, who were like women, without strength, were destitute of any means of help; but then he says, that they would be superior in strength to their enemies, whose power filled the whole world with terror. We, indeed, know what sort of monarchy Babylon was when the Jews were led into exile. If then we consider what the Jews at that time were, we must say that they were like weak women, while their enemies were strong and warlike: *A woman* then *shall surround a man.*[1]

The word סבב, *sebab*, means not to embrace, but oftentimes to besiege; and it is taken in many places of Scripture in a bad sense, "Enemies have surrounded me." When, therefore, a siege is mentioned, the Scripture uses this word. It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, "Women shall bring men into such straits that they shall hold them captive."[2] But he uses the singular number, as though he

[1] Whatever may be the meaning of this clause, it cannot certainly be applied to the miraculous conception of our Saviour, and for this plain reason, as *Blayney* observes, that the only thing the passage announces, if viewed in this light, is this,—that a woman shall conceive a male child, which is nothing new, but a common event; for the word here for "woman," is not what signifies a virgin, but what designates only the sex; it means properly a female as distinguished from a male. *Henry*, as well as *Blayney* and Adam *Clarke*, agree materially with *Calvin* as to the meaning of this sentence.—*Ed.*

[2] The principal objection to this interpretation has been, that it was not by overcoming their enemies by force of arms that the Jews returned.

phet, no doubt, commends here the grace of God, because the veil had been taken away from the eyes of the people, or because they had been cured of their blindness; as though they had said, that they had long been blind, because they took delight in their vices, and their whole soul was in a torpid state; for we know that those who are forsaken by God are wholly insensible, and are as it were like the beasts. Then the people of Israel confess that they were, for a time, thus stupid, and that their minds were blinded: they therefore acknowledge here the grace of God, that he had at length opened their eyes. For they do not speak here, as we have said, of their virtue or power, but acknowledge that it proceeded wholly from God's gratuitous favour that they repented.

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It was not without reason that the Prophet employed this mode of speaking; for Jerusalem, we know, was entirely overthrown, and the Temple pulled down, and even burnt with fire. As then this was a spectacle awful and dreadful to all, there is here described a wonderful revolution, even that Sion would again be the *mount of holiness*, and Jerusalem the *habitation of justice*, though then a solitude and desolation. And this passage deserves a special notice, so that we may know that God restores his Church as though he drew it up even from hell itself. When, therefore, there is no form of a Church appearing, let us allow that the power of God can raise it up. Whence? even, as it has been said, from hell. It follows,—

24. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they *that* go forth with flocks.

24. Et sedebunt (*vel*, habitabunt) in ea (*nempe terra*) Jehudah, et omnes urbes ejus (*id est*, incolæ ejus,) simul agricolæ, et proficiscentur cum grege.

He proceeds with the same subject, but sets forth the effect of that favour of which he had spoken, for *dwell*, he says, shall the Jews again in the land; that is, they shall rest there and have a quiet habitation. He adds *cities*, only to amplify the favour of God as to the number and multiplicity of men; as though he had said, that not a few would return, but a vast number of men, sufficient to fill their cities. Now this was to exceed the hope of all; for when they saw the cities deserted, and the land almost empty, who would have thought that they would again be filled with people? But this the Prophet confirms by saying, *Dwell there shall Judah and all his cities;* and he adds, *husbandmen*. He extends God's favour to the country and the villages, as though he had said, that the land would be filled with inhabitants, not only as to the fortified towns, but as to the fields.

It often happens that cities are inhabited when there is any fear or danger from enemies; for they who dwell in cities have walls for their defence, and mounds and other means of safety. Had then the Prophet spoken only of cities, he would not have sufficiently set forth the favour of God. Hence he adds *husbandmen*, as though he had said, that dwelling

in the land would be safe, though there were no gates, no walls, no defences, for husbandmen would rest secure in their cottages as though inclosed within walls. We now then understand what the Prophet means.

Some read thus, "Husbandmen, and they who go forth with the flock," as though the Prophet made a distinction between husbandmen and keepers of sheep; but this seems to me unsuitable; for I doubt not but that he means that husbandmen with their flocks and herds would be secure, having no fear of the inroads of enemies, but living in the land under the care and protection of God, without apprehending anything adverse or hostile to them. The meaning is, that the restoration of the Church would be such, that its state would not be worse than in former ages, and that it would be in a peaceable and quiet condition, so that the inhabitants of the villages and country places would not be less secure than those in cities.[1]

Now, were any one to ask, when was this fulfilled? We must bear in mind what has been said elsewhere,—that the Prophets, when speaking of the restoration of the Church, included the whole kingdom of Christ from the beginning to the end. And in this our divines go astray, so that by confining these promises to some particular time, they are compelled to fly to allegories; and thus they wrest, and even pervert all the prophecies. But the Prophets, as it has been said, include the whole progress of Christ's kingdom when they speak of the future redemption of the people. The people began to do well when they returned to their own country; but soon after distresses came as Daniel had pre-

[1] *Blayney* renders the verse thus,—

And Judah shall dwell in it and all his cities,
Husbandmen together, and they shall go about with flocks.

Like *Calvin* he takes "cities" for citizens; but still there is an inappropriateness in the words. I regard the word "land" as understood before "Judah,"—

And dwell in it, *the land* of Judah,
And *in* all his cities together,
Shall husbandmen; and they shall remove with *their* flocks.

See chap. xxxiii. 12, 13, where the meaning of what is here said is made more evident. "Remove," that is, from place to place, as the word means, for the purpose of feeding their flocks. This betokened a state of liberty and of security.—*Ed.*

the verse, even that the people were unworthy of any mercy, because they had abolished, as far as they could, the favour of adoption: for by the word *son*, he refers to that special favour, the covenant which he had made with the seed of Abraham.

In the first place, he calls him a son, בֵּן, *ben*, and then a child, יֶלֶד, *ilad*, which refers to his birth: but by these two names, God here intimates that they were to him a peculiar people, as he everywhere calls those his sons who were the descendants of Abraham; for circumcision was to them a symbol and pledge of the covenant; and so the time is a circumstance that ought to be noticed, because God does not shew here what the Israelites were before he had chosen them to be his people. But as I have already said, he charges them with ingratitude, since the time they had been adopted by him as his children. He then calls them sons, or children, by way of concession, and with regard to their adoption, as Jerusalem was called the holy city, because it was God's habitation. There is then a concession as to the name given to them. But he afterwards adds, that this *son* was not *precious*, that is, worthy of any honour, and that he was not an object of *delight;* as though he had said, that he was of a perverse and wicked disposition, so that he could not take any delight in him, as by another simile he complains in chapter ii. 21, as we have seen, that the Jews were become bitter to him, "My vine have I planted thee; why then art thou turned to me into bitterness?" So also now he says, that the Israelites were indeed his sons, but that they were evil-disposed sons, disobedient sons, sons who only vexed their father, who wounded his feelings, who filled him with sorrow.

He then adds, *For from the time I spake in him*, so it is literally. It is commonly agreed that these words are to be read with those which follow. "For from what time I spake;" and thus the relative אֲשֶׁר, *asher*, is to be understood; but literally it is, "For from the time I spake in him," בּוֹ, *bu*, or, as some render it, "concerning him;" but it may suitably be rendered "with him." Then they read, in connection with this, *Remembering I will yet remember him.*

This passage, on account of its brevity, is obscure, and therefore ambiguous; but the common opinion is this,—that though Ephraim was not a child of delight, yet God would be merciful towards him; and thus they take כִּי, *ki*, in an adversative sense, "notwithstanding," or yet: "Is Ephraim a precious son? Is he a child of delight? yet remembering I will still remember him;" as though he had said, that he would not be prevented by the people's wickedness, for he would still pity him according to his infinite goodness, or that his goodness would surpass their wickedness. This sense is plausible; yet it may be doubted whether this be the meaning. Some read the words, "From the time I spake concerning him," that is, while I now speak of him: but I know not whether this explanation can stand. I am therefore inclined to the opinion of those who refer this to threatenings, even that from the time God had spoken against Israel, he was yet ready to be reconciled to them, according to what is said by the Prophet Habakkuk, "In wrath wilt thou remember mercy." (Hab. iii. 2.) But this ought to be rather understood of the covenant, as though God had said, "From the time I spake with him, I will remember him;" that is, that he might shew the reason why he dealt so mercifully with the people. For as their wickedness and corruption were so great, a doubt might arise, "Can God still patiently endure them?" Here then our attention is called back to the fountain of gratuitous mercy, even that God would forgive his people, because he had once chosen them.

But still when I narrowly weigh everything, I think the meaning of the Prophet to be different. I therefore separate the two clauses, "From the time I spake with him," and, "Remembering I will yet remember him;" for the sentence is harsh, when we say, "From the time I spake with him," and then add, "I will yet remember him." But the exposition, the most suitable in my opinion, is this, "From the time I spake with him," (for בְּ means with,) that is, I desisted not continually to exhort him to repentance, and yet I effected nothing; notwithstanding I will still remember him; that is, "Though I have found this people very perverse, and though they have long given many proofs

of their obstinacy, for I have spoken to them for a long time, nevertheless I will still remember them." For the people deserved eternal ruin who had been so often warned; but God declares that he would still be propitious to them, though he had spoken to them for a time, that is, a long time; for he had not ceased for a long space of time to exhort that people by his Prophets, but with no success. So then I read the words, "From the time I spake with him," separately from what follows, and connect them with the former clauses, "Is he a precious son? Is he a child of delight?" For he complains that they had been rebellious and untameable, not only from the time he had only once addressed them and sought to do them good, but for several ages. He therefore declares that the people themselves had no hope, because they had been intractable for a long time. He yet adds, though it was so, *Remembering I will still remember him.*[1]

And he enhances the benefit of this reconciliation, and says, *Therefore sounded have my bowels for him,*[2] *pitying I will pity him.* Here God ascribes to himself human feelings; for the bowels are moved and make a noise under immoderate grief; and we sigh and groan deeply, when we are pressed down by great sorrow. So also when God expresses

[1] This verse has been variously explained. The two questions are taken by *Calvin* and by others as strong negatives: but this is not always the case; both ה and הֲ are often taken as strong affirmatives. See chap. iii. 6; 1 Sam. ii. 27; Ezek. xx. 30; Amos vi. 2. This sense is what the context requires; for this verse is an answer to penitent Ephraim. Neither the *Sept.*, nor the *Vulg.*, nor the *Syr.*, nor the *Targ.* retain the interrogatory form: but they retain the meaning, if the questions be taken affirmatively, not otherwise. The next words I render thus,—

For since my words *are* in him,
Remembering I will still remember him.

This is according to the *Sept.*, and the general drift of the *Targ.* The *Syr.* gives another meaning,—

For at the time when I speak against him,
Remembering I still remember him.

There are no other versions which come so near to the original.—*Ed.*

[2] The word for "sounded," means to tumultuate, to be agitated, to be greatly moved or disturbed. It is rendered by the *Vulg.*, "are troubled —conturbata;" by the *Syr.* and *Targ.*, "are moved." It may be rendered "trouble" here. See Isa. xvi. 11, where the action of the bowels is compared to the harp, not surely to its sound, but to the vibration of its cords. See also Isa. lxiii. 15, and Cant. v. 4.—*Ed.*

the feelings of a tender father, he says that his bowels made a noise, because he wished to receive his people again into favour. This, indeed, does not properly belong to God; but as he could not otherwise express the greatness of his love towards us, he thus speaks in condescension to our capacities. It follows—

21. Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, *even* the way *which* thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

21. Statue tibi titulos, pone tibi acervos, adjice (*vel*, applica) cor tuum ad semitam, ad viam per quam ambulasti; revertere virgo Israel, revertere ad urbes tuas istas.

He describes what mercy would do, even that God would at length restore the captives and bring them back from exile to their own country. There was however mention made previously of his favour, that we may know that the people were restored for no other reason but because God had mercy on them. The Prophet then having pointed out the fountain of redemption, passes on now to the external effect, by which God proved that he was reconciled to his people. Hence he says, *set up for thee titles.*

We must first understand why the Prophet speaks thus. When the Jews were led away into Chaldea, they thought that a return was closed up against them. Having then given up every concern for their country, they dwelt among foreign nations, as though they were dead to the land of Canaan. They knew that they had forfeited that land; but they did not understand what had been so often said to them by the Prophets, that their punishment was to be temporary. As they had before disregarded all threatenings, so when God began to fulminate against them, despair overwhelmed their minds, so that they did not wish to hear anything about a return. As then they thought that they were never to return to their own country, they had forgotten the way. As when one moves to another place where he intends to dwell all his life, he only seeks to know the way thither, but does not observe the accommodations on the road, in order to use them again, nor does he take notice which way he goes, whether he turns here to the right and there to the left; it is enough for him to reach the place to which he is

dicted. It was, therefore, necessary for them to look for the coming of Christ. We now taste of these benefits of God as long as we are in the world. We hence see that these prophecies are not accomplished in one day, or in one year, no, not even in one age, but ought to be understood as referring to the beginning and the end of Christ's kingdom. It follows,—

25. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.	25. Quia irrigabo (*vel*, inebriabo) animam sitientem, et omnem animam quæ deficit implebo.

By this verse he removes every doubt, lest any one should reject what he had promised as to the restoration of the people, because the Jews and the Israelites were at the time as dead men. He therefore says, *I will water the thirsty soul;* some render it "the weary soul;" but נפש עיפה, *nuphesh oiphe*, is often taken metaphorically for a thirsty soul. So in Psalm cxliii. 6, it is said, "I am as a dry land;" weariness cannot be suitably applied to land; and in Isaiah xxix. 8, we have these words, "As one dreaming he thinks that he eats; afterwards, when awake, his soul is empty: and as one who thinks that he drinks," &c. The Prophet employs there the same word, because there is hardly ever weariness without thirst; we contract thirst by weariness. Then the soul is said to be עיפה, *oiphe*, by a metaphor, not weary, but on the contrary thirsty; and the verb corresponds, which means to inebriate, to irrigate, or to water, and often to satiate. *I will* then *irrigate*, or water to satiety, *thy dry soul*, and *every soul which faints*, &c., but as דאב, *dab*, means to be deficient, and sometimes to be wearied, here it denotes a defect, for it follows, *I will fill.* It is then to be taken for a famished soul.[1]

The meaning is, that though the Israelites should hunger and thirst, and be for a time without food and drink, yet

[1] Both the *Sept.* and *Syr.* render the first word "thirsty," and the second, "hungry," agreeably with the verbs which precede them. The "weary" and "sorrowful" of our version are no doubt wrong; the first, adopted from the *Vulg.*; and the second from the *Targ.*

For I will water the thirsty soul,
And every hungry soul will I fill.

"Soul" here means the person, the individual,—"I will water him that is thirsty," &c.—*Ed.*

their want would not prevent God from affording them relief, for he had the power and the will to satisfy the hungry, and to give drink to the thirsty, or to those who were fainting on account of thirst. It now follows,—

26. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.	26. Propterea expergefactus sum et vidi, et somnus meus dulcis fuit mihi, (*vel* utilis.)

Here the Prophet comes forth, and by his own example encourages the faithful to be confident, even to recumb on God's promise, as though they really enjoyed already what was as yet hid from them, nay, as it has been said, incredible. He then says, that he *awoke* and *saw*. This metaphor ought to be applied to a feeling contrary to that by which the Prophet had been, as it were, astonished. For though the Jews were not yet led into exile, yet the ten tribes were in that miserable bondage,—their kingdom had fallen and perished, and final ruin was nigh the kingdom of Judah. While then the Prophet was considering these dreadful vengeances of God, he was, as it were, overwhelmed with sleep. He now says that he *awoke*. As in darkness men lose the vigour of their minds, and sleep also prevails, so that they cannot distinguish between black and white; so also the Prophet confesses that he was for a time, as it were, lifeless; he then says, that he awoke, that is, when God's favour shone forth, not by its own effect, but in this prophecy.

We then see that he knew as through a mirror what was yet far distant; for the term of seventy years had not as yet commenced: but faith, as it is well known, is the seeing of things hid, and the substance of things absent; for except the word of God obtains in our hearts this assurance, we betray our unbelief. The Prophet gave a proof of his faith, for he fully acknowledged that all that had been by God predicted, though far distant, would yet be accomplished in due time. We now understand why he says, that he *awoke*.

And he adds, *And my sleep was pleasant to me*. After having said that he *saw* the work of God, which yet could not be seen by the human eye, he now adds that his sleep had been pleasant to him, while yet he had been sorrowful and full of fear; for the best alleviator of all sorrow is hope

that they torment themselves, and, as it were, designedly contrive for themselves many inquietudes. Since then the Israelites were looking forward to what might happen, and could not entertain any hope as to their return, except when some appearance of hope was presented to them, the Prophet now on this account reproves them.

He first calls the *people disobedient* or rebellious, for they had often been terrified by threatenings, and God had also offered them the hope of pardon. As they had been perverse whenever God spared them, and as they had also rejected all his promises, the Prophet does not without reason call them disobedient or rebellious. And by *circuits* or wanderings, he means those vain speculations with which the unbelieving are wont to weary themselves; for the word means properly to go around. We may indeed take it in the sense of wandering, and it is the same thing: but as I have said, the Prophet most fitly gives the name of circuits to those crooked and tortuous speculations in which the unbelieving indulged. And there seems to be understood a contrast between the straight way set before them by God, and those circuitous courses in which miserable men entangle themselves, when they do not follow God, but are led astray by their own vain devices. Isaiah also makes use of the same similitude, for he says, that the people were carried away by their own inventions, so that they fruitlessly wearied themselves, because they did not proceed in the straight way. (Isa. lvii. 10.)[1]

We may hence deduce a useful doctrine,—that we are always within the boundary of safety, when we obey God and walk in the way set before us in his word; but that as soon as we turn aside from the right way, we are only drawn here

[1] The verb, rendered "going about," only occurs here in *Hithpael*, and once in *Kal*, Cant. v. 6; where it means to "withdraw," or recede, or turn aside. And this sense of withdrawing is what is given to it here both by the *Sept.*, the *Targ.*, and the *Syr.*; but it is the withdrawing from accepting the return offered. We may give this version,—

How long wilt thou decline, (*i.e.*, to return,) O daughter of the restoration?

She had been before exhorted to return in the previous verse: she is now blamed for her unwillingness, which seems to have arisen from fear, and a sense of weakness. Then comes in most appropriately what follows, if interpreted according to the explanation of *Calvin*. The verb שׁוּב, the root of הִשׁוֹבֵבָה, means more frequently to turn to, to return, than to turn away, to apostatize.—*Ed.*

and there through windings and strayings, so that our labour is at last useless and even ruinous.

We now then understand the meaning of the Prophet: as the unbelief of the people was, as it were, a sealed door, so that they did not receive God's promises as to their liberation and return, his purpose here was to correct this evil, and to reprove the Israelites for wandering and being disobedient.

He afterwards adds, *For behold Jehovah will create*—literally, has created; but the past tense is here to be taken for the future; and it serves to shew the certainty of a thing when he uses the past tense, as though he was speaking of a thing already done: *Jehovah* then has *created a new thing.* He intimates that the Israelites acted foolishly in estimating the promise of deliverance according to their own judgment of things, and the state of things as it appeared to them; for he says that the favour promised them would be wonderful, for this is what he means by a *new* thing, as though he had said, "Ye indeed judge, according to your usual manner, of what God promises to you, as to your return, but it will be a miracle; act not then perversely, by regarding the favour of God as the common order of nature, for God will surpass everything that is usual among men."

It ought also to be observed, that what Jeremiah said of the redemption of the people is to be extended to the eternal salvation of the Church; for God in a wonderful manner raises the dead, defends and preserves his Church, and succours her in her troubles. Whenever then the Scripture speaks of the state of the Church, we ought to ascend above the world, and above our own conceptions, and to realize the miracle which is hid from us.

Now follows the miracle, *A woman shall surround a man.* Christians, almost with one consent, explain this of the virgin Mary; and the "new thing," leads them to this opinion, and probably, also, they were anxious to lay hold on whatever might seem to refer to the mystery of our salvation. They, therefore, say that the *new thing* of which the Prophet speaks is the virgin carrying the infant Christ in her womb, and that he is called *man,* because he was full

of divine power, though he increased according to the flesh in stature, wisdom, and strength. All this is deservedly laughed at by the Jews; yet they themselves, as I think, do not rightly understand the meaning of the Prophet. They apply it to the people of Israel, because they were like a woman divorced from her husband. They then say, "A woman shall embrace a man after having been alienated from him, and prostituted herself to many adulterers." The Jews seem to think that they give the meaning of the Prophet; but I think otherwise, for there is here a comparison made between a woman and a man, which they do not consider. For the Prophet does not speak here simply of a man, but of a strong man; for the word גבר, *geber*, means a man who is brave or courageous. When, therefore, he compares a woman to a man, I doubt not but the Prophet means that the Israelites, who were like women, without strength, were destitute of any means of help; but then he says, that they would be superior in strength to their enemies, whose power filled the whole world with terror. We, indeed, know what sort of monarchy Babylon was when the Jews were led into exile. If then we consider what the Jews at that time were, we must say that they were like weak women, while their enemies were strong and warlike: *A woman* then *shall surround a man.*[1]

The word סבב, *sebab*, means not to embrace, but oftentimes to besiege; and it is taken in many places of Scripture in a bad sense, "Enemies have surrounded me." When, therefore, a siege is mentioned, the Scripture uses this word. It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, "Women shall bring men into such straits that they shall hold them captive."[2] But he uses the singular number, as though he

[1] Whatever may be the meaning of this clause, it cannot certainly be applied to the miraculous conception of our Saviour, and for this plain reason, as *Blayney* observes, that the only thing the passage announces, if viewed in this light, is this,—that a woman shall conceive a male child, which is nothing new, but a common event; for the word here for "woman," is not what signifies a virgin, but what designates only the sex; it means properly a female as distinguished from a male. *Henry*, as well as *Blayney* and Adam *Clarke*, agree materially with *Calvin* as to the meaning of this sentence.—*Ed.*

[2] The principal objection to this interpretation has been, that it was not by overcoming their enemies by force of arms that the Jews returned.

had said, "One woman shall be superior to many men, or each Jew shall exceed in valour a Chaldean; so the Jews shall gain the upper hand, though the strength of their enemies be great and terrible." This is what I regard as the meaning of the Prophet; and justly does he set forth this as a wonderful thing, for it was a sort of revolution in the world when God thus raised up his servants, so that they who had enslaved them should become far unequal to them. It follows,—

23. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity, The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, *and* mountain of holiness.

23. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Adhuc dicent hoc verbum (*hoc est*, pronunciabunt hunc sermonem) in terra Jehudah et urbibus ejus, ubi convertero captivitatem ipsorum, Benedicet tibi Jehova, habitaculum justitiæ, mons sanctitatis.

He confirms in other words what he has said before; nor is the repetition, as we have said elsewhere, superfluous; for it was difficult to convince the Jews that what they had already regarded as impossible could be effected; for by their perverseness they had closed, as it were, the door against the word of God. As then despair had thus laid hold on them, and fast bound their minds, it was necessary to dwell at large on the subject, so that they might at length embrace the promise of deliverance. This is the reason why the Prophet employed many words on the same subject.

Now he makes this preface, that he had his message from God; and he speaks in his name, so that the incredible thing might be believed both by the Israelites and the Jews. *They shall yet,* he says, *say in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I shall restore their captivity,* &c. By these words the Prophet brings forward the Israelites and the Jews, as it were, into the middle, that they might see placed before their eyes what they deemed impossible. *When I shall restore,* therefore, *their captivity,* they shall again say, *Bless thee may God, O dwelling-place of justice, O mountain of holiness.*

The answer to this is, that this is a sort of proverbial expression, intimating that the weakest would prevail over the strongest. Besides, though the Jews returned by virtue of the edict of the king of Persia, yet they had many and strong enemies to oppose them.—*Ed.*

It was not without reason that the Prophet employed this mode of speaking; for Jerusalem, we know, was entirely overthrown, and the Temple pulled down, and even burnt with fire. As then this was a spectacle awful and dreadful to all, there is here described a wonderful revolution, even that Sion would again be the *mount of holiness*, and Jerusalem the *habitation of justice*, though then a solitude and desolation. And this passage deserves a special notice, so that we may know that God restores his Church as though he drew it up even from hell itself. When, therefore, there is no form of a Church appearing, let us allow that the power of God can raise it up. Whence? even, as it has been said, from hell. It follows,—

24. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they *that* go forth with flocks.

24. Et sedebunt (*vel*, habitabunt) in ea (*nempe terra*) Jehudah, et omnes urbes ejus (*id est*, incolæ ejus,) simul agricolæ, et proficiscentur cum grege.

He proceeds with the same subject, but sets forth the effect of that favour of which he had spoken, for *dwell*, he says, shall the Jews again in the land; that is, they shall rest there and have a quiet habitation. He adds *cities*, only to amplify the favour of God as to the number and multiplicity of men; as though he had said, that not a few would return, but a vast number of men, sufficient to fill their cities. Now this was to exceed the hope of all; for when they saw the cities deserted, and the land almost empty, who would have thought that they would again be filled with people? But this the Prophet confirms by saying, *Dwell there shall Judah and all his cities;* and he adds, *husbandmen.* He extends God's favour to the country and the villages, as though he had said, that the land would be filled with inhabitants, not only as to the fortified towns, but as to the fields.

It often happens that cities are inhabited when there is any fear or danger from enemies; for they who dwell in cities have walls for their defence, and mounds and other means of safety. Had then the Prophet spoken only of cities, he would not have sufficiently set forth the favour of God. Hence he adds *husbandmen*, as though he had said, that dwelling

in the land would be safe, though there were no gates, no walls, no defences, for husbandmen would rest secure in their cottages as though inclosed within walls. We now then understand what the Prophet means.

Some read thus, "Husbandmen, and they who go forth with the flock," as though the Prophet made a distinction between husbandmen and keepers of sheep; but this seems to me unsuitable; for I doubt not but that he means that husbandmen with their flocks and herds would be secure, having no fear of the inroads of enemies, but living in the land under the care and protection of God, without apprehending anything adverse or hostile to them. The meaning is, that the restoration of the Church would be such, that its state would not be worse than in former ages, and that it would be in a peaceable and quiet condition, so that the inhabitants of the villages and country places would not be less secure than those in cities.[1]

Now, were any one to ask, when was this fulfilled? We must bear in mind what has been said elsewhere,—that the Prophets, when speaking of the restoration of the Church, included the whole kingdom of Christ from the beginning to the end. And in this our divines go astray, so that by confining these promises to some particular time, they are compelled to fly to allegories; and thus they wrest, and even pervert all the prophecies. But the Prophets, as it has been said, include the whole progress of Christ's kingdom when they speak of the future redemption of the people. The people began to do well when they returned to their own country; but soon after distresses came as Daniel had pre-

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Like *Calvin* he takes "cities" for citizens; but still there is an inappropriateness in the words. I regard the word "land" as understood before "Judah,"—

And dwell in it, *the land* of Judah,
And *in* all his cities together,
Shall husbandmen; and they shall remove with *their* flocks.

See chap. xxxiii. 12, 13, where the meaning of what is here said is made more evident. "Remove," that is, from place to place, as the word means, for the purpose of feeding their flocks. This betokened a state of liberty and of security.—*Ed.*

dicted. It was, therefore, necessary for them to look for the coming of Christ. We now taste of these benefits of God as long as we are in the world. We hence see that these prophecies are not accomplished in one day, or in one year, no, not even in one age, but ought to be understood as referring to the beginning and the end of Christ's kingdom. It follows,—

25. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.	25. Quia irrigabo (*vel*, inebriabo) animam sitientem, et omnem animam quæ deficit implebo.

By this verse he removes every doubt, lest any one should reject what he had promised as to the restoration of the people, because the Jews and the Israelites were at the time as dead men. He therefore says, *I will water the thirsty soul;* some render it "the weary soul;" but נפש עיפה, *nuphesh oiphe*, is often taken metaphorically for a thirsty soul. So in Psalm cxliii. 6, it is said, "I am as a dry land;" weariness cannot be suitably applied to land; and in Isaiah xxix. 8, we have these words, "As one dreaming he thinks that he eats; afterwards, when awake, his soul is empty: and as one who thinks that he drinks," &c. The Prophet employs there the same word, because there is hardly ever weariness without thirst; we contract thirst by weariness. Then the soul is said to be עיפה, *oiphe*, by a metaphor, not weary, but on the contrary thirsty; and the verb corresponds, which means to inebriate, to irrigate, or to water, and often to satiate. *I will* then *irrigate*, or water to satiety, *thy dry soul*, and *every soul which faints*, &c., but as דאב, *dab*, means to be deficient, and sometimes to be wearied, here it denotes a defect, for it follows, *I will fill.* It is then to be taken for a famished soul.[1]

The meaning is, that though the Israelites should hunger and thirst, and be for a time without food and drink, yet

[1] Both the *Sept.* and *Syr.* render the first word "thirsty," and the second, "hungry," agreeably with the verbs which precede them. The "weary" and "sorrowful" of our version are no doubt wrong; the first, adopted from the *Vulg.*; and the second from the *Targ.*

For I will water the thirsty soul,
And every hungry soul will I fill.

"Soul" here means the person, the individual,—"I will water him that is thirsty," &c.—*Ed.*

their want would not prevent God from affording them relief, for he had the power and the will to satisfy the hungry, and to give drink to the thirsty, or to those who were fainting on account of thirst. It now follows,—

26. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.	26. Propterea expergefactus sum et vidi, et somnus meus dulcis fuit mihi, (*vel* utilis.)

Here the Prophet comes forth, and by his own example encourages the faithful to be confident, even to recumb on God's promise, as though they really enjoyed already what was as yet hid from them, nay, as it has been said, incredible. He then says, that he *awoke* and *saw*. This metaphor ought to be applied to a feeling contrary to that by which the Prophet had been, as it were, astonished. For though the Jews were not yet led into exile, yet the ten tribes were in that miserable bondage,—their kingdom had fallen and perished, and final ruin was nigh the kingdom of Judah. While then the Prophet was considering these dreadful vengeances of God, he was, as it were, overwhelmed with sleep. He now says that he *awoke*. As in darkness men lose the vigour of their minds, and sleep also prevails, so that they cannot distinguish between black and white; so also the Prophet confesses that he was for a time, as it were, lifeless; he then says, that he awoke, that is, when God's favour shone forth, not by its own effect, but in this prophecy.

We then see that he knew as through a mirror what was yet far distant; for the term of seventy years had not as yet commenced: but faith, as it is well known, is the seeing of things hid, and the substance of things absent; for except the word of God obtains in our hearts this assurance, we betray our unbelief. The Prophet gave a proof of his faith, for he fully acknowledged that all that had been by God predicted, though far distant, would yet be accomplished in due time. We now understand why he says, that he *awoke*.

And he adds, *And my sleep was pleasant to me*. After having said that he *saw* the work of God, which yet could not be seen by the human eye, he now adds that his sleep had been pleasant to him, while yet he had been sorrowful and full of fear; for the best alleviator of all sorrow is hope.

But we have said that the sorrow by which the mind of the Prophet had been for a time overwhelmed, is compared to a sleep.[1] He now adds,—

27. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.

27. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et seminabo domum Israel et domum Jehudah semine hominis et semine animalis.

We see that the Prophet brings forward nothing new, but only animates the Jews with confidence as to their deliverance and their return. He yet employs another similitude, even that God would again *sow* Judah in the land, that he might produce an increase of men, and also of cattle, and of all kinds of animals. We have said that the land was to be for a time dreary and forsaken. As God then thus condemned as it were the land, that all might regard it as given up to desolation and solitude, the Prophet says that God would cause it to be inhabited again by both men and beasts.

But the similitude sets forth still more fully the favour of God. There is to be understood a contrast between a cultivated and a deserted land. It is as though one should say, "They shall sow and reap on mountains, where corn has never been, where a plough has never been seen." Were any one then to promise a sowing and a harvest in a desert land, it would be a new thing, and could hardly be believed. Even so does the Prophet now say, *I will sow*, &c., as though he said, "The land indeed shall for a time be accursed, so that it will not sustain either men or beasts; but it shall be sown again." *I will sow it*, he says, *with the seed both of men and of animals:* and thus he meets a question, which might have been asked, "How can it be that the land will be again inhabited, since it is now deserted by its inhabitants?" even because God *will sow* it. In this way then, the Prophet answers the question. But at the same time he exalts the

[1] It is difficult to see exactly the purport of this verse: what does "beheld," or saw, mean? May not the verb be considered as in *Hophal*, "I was made to see," or, had a vision? The verb is often used in this sense: see Zech. iii. 1. Then we may give this version,—

Hereupon I awoke and had a vision;
And my sleep had been pleasant to me.

Visions were of two kinds, given in sleep, and given to persons awake: the previous vision was given to the Prophet while he was asleep.—*Ed.*

favour of God, as though he had said, that there would be no other remedy for the barrenness of the land, until God should cultivate it himself, and scatter seed on it: which is the same as to say, that the restoration of the land would not be the work of human industry or power, but of the wonderful power of God.[1] It follows,—

28. And it shall come to pass, *that* like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.

28. Et erit, sicuti vigilavi super eos ad evellendum et conterendum, et ad confringendum et ad perdendum, et ad affligendum, sic vigilabo super eos ad ædificandum et ad plantandum, dicit Jehova.

By these words the Prophet confirms what he had said; for the Israelites and the Jews might have ever made this objection, "Why should God promise to be the liberator of his people, whom he had suffered to be oppressed with so great evils, for it would have been easier to prevent them?" The Jews then might have raised this clamour, "Thou givest us here the hope of a return, but why does God suffer us to be driven into exile? why then does he not apply the remedy in time; for now too late he declares that he will be a help to us after our ruin." As then the Jews thought that a restoration was promised to them unseasonably, the Prophet says that it was God who chastised them and punished them for their sins, and that he could also relieve them whenever it pleased him. For had the Chaldeans, according to their own pleasure, ruled over the Jews, and had obtained the victory over them, who could have ever hoped that the miserable men, thus reduced, could have been delivered by God's hand? But now the Prophet shews that there was no reason for the Jews to despair, as though it were difficult for God to free them from the tyranny of their enemies; for nothing had happened to them by chance, or through the power of their enemies, but through the righteous judgment of God.

[1] I am disposed to render the latter part of this verse according to the *Syriac*,—

That I will sow, as to the house of Israel and the house of Judah,
The seed of man and the seed of beast.

I take את as a preposition, which it often is.—*Ed.*

We now then perceive the design of the Holy Spirit in what the Prophet says, *As I have watched over them to pluck up and to break down, and to break in pieces and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch,* &c.[1] God then sets himself forth as the judge who had punished them for their sins, in order that he might convince them that he would also become their Physician, as though he had said, "I who have inflicted the wound can therefore heal it," according to what is said elsewhere, "God is he who kills and brings to life, who leads down to the grave and brings up." (1 Samuel ii. 6.) But he employs many words, for the great mass of so many evils might have plunged the Jews into the abyss of despair. Hence the Prophet anticipates them, and shews, that though they had been reduced to extremities, yet so many and so severe calamities could not prevent God from restoring them, when it seemed good to him. He yet reminds them, that it was not without cause that they suffered such grievous things; for God takes no delight in the miseries of his people. The people then ought to have learnt that they had been guilty of great sins from the fact, that they had been chastised with so much rigour and severity. He now adds, *So will I watch over you to build and to plant.*

As for the verb *destroy*, if we read הרם, *erem*, it ought to be rendered, *and to take away.* The verb רם, *rem*, as it is well known, means to elevate; but metaphorically, to take away. But the received reading, as I have said, is הרס, *eres.* He says, that he would *watch* to *build* and to *plant* them, as he had watched to *destroy* them; as though he had said, that they had already been taught by experience, how great was the power of God's hand to save as well as to destroy. They had disregarded threatenings as long as God had spared them, and they thought that they could sin with impunity; and we see how insolently they rejected all the Prophets. But God had at length shewed by severe proofs how his judgments ought to have been dreaded. He now

[1] The words here used are the very same with those in ch. i. 10, except the addition, "to afflict;" and yet neither the *Targ.*, nor the Versions, except the *Syriac*, render them alike, giving in some instances the meaning of one verb to another,—a proof that they are very loose versions. See vol. i., note in p. 47.—*Ed.*

then inspires them with hope, for his watching would no less avail for their preservation. It follows,—

29. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.

29. In diebus illis non dicent amplius, Patres comederunt omphacium (*uvam acerbam,*) et dentes filiorum obstupuerunt:

30. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

30. Quin potius vir (*hoc est,* quisque) in sua iniquitate morietur; omnis homo comedens (*hoc est,* quisquis comederit) uvam acerbam obstupescent dentes ejus (*aut,* omnis viri qui comederit, dentes obstupescent.)

Ezekiel shews that it was a complaint commonly prevailing among the people, that they suffered for the sins of their fathers, as Horace also says, a heathen and a despiser of God, "O Roman, thou dost undeservedly suffer for the faults of thy fathers."[1] Such, then, was the arrogance of the Jews, as to strive with God, as though he punished them, while they were innocent; and they expressed this by using a proverb, "If our fathers have eaten sour grapes, what is the reason that our teeth are set on edge?" We know that teeth are set on edge when unripe fruits are eaten; but the word properly means sour grapes, which the Greeks call *omphakes.* Then the Prophet says, that this proverb would be no longer used, for after having been tamed by evils, they would at length know that God had not dealt so severely with them without a just cause.

We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet. And he says, *In those days,* that is, after God had punished the people, and also embraced them through his mercy; for both these things were necessary, that is, that their perverseness and pride should be subdued, and that they should cease to expostulate with God, and also that the gratuitous favour of God should be manifested to them. At that time then, he says, they shall not use this impious proverb, *The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth have been blunted:*[2] *but on the contrary,* he adds, *every one shall*

[1] *Carm., Lib.* 3, *Od.* 6.

[2] The *Targum* thus interprets this proverb, "The fathers have sinned, and the children have been smitten." "Blunted," or deprived of feeling, *obstupuerunt,* is both the *Vulg.* and the *Syr.*—*Ed.*

die in his own iniquity; *and whosoever eateth a sour grape, his teeth shall be blunted;* that is, at that time the just judgment of God shall be exalted, so that there will be no place for these insolent and blasphemous clamours; the mercy of God will also be made manifest, for men, worthy of death, will be delivered, but not otherwise than through the gratuitous goodness of God.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou warnest us daily by so many evidences of thy wrath, that we may in due time repent,—O grant, that we may not be slow to consider thy work, and also the doctrine which thou addest, but anticipate thy extreme vengeance, and thus be made capable of receiving thy mercy, that as thou freely offerest it to us, we may anxiously embrace it, and also so retain it in our hearts by true faith, that thou mayest continue its course towards us, until we shall at length reach that blessed rest, which has been prepared for us in heaven by Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-Third.

31. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;

32. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day *that* I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord.)

31. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et percutiam cum domo Israel et cum domo Jehudah fœdus novum:

32. Non secundum fœdus quod percussi cum patribus eorum die quo apprehendi manum eorum, ut educerem eos è terra Egypti, quòd irritum fecerunt fœdus, *inquam*, et ego dominabor illis, dicit Jehova.

JEREMIAH proceeds with the same subject, but shews more clearly how much more abundant and richer the favour of God would be towards his people than formerly. He then does not simply promise the restoration of that dignity and greatness which they had lost, but something better and more excellent. We hence see that this passage necessarily refers to the kingdom of Christ, for without Christ nothing could or ought to have been hoped for by the people, superior to the Law; for the Law was a rule of the most perfect doc-

trine. If then Christ be taken away, it is certain that we must abide in the Law.

We hence then conclude, that the Prophet predicts of the kingdom of Christ; and this passage is also quoted by the Apostles, as being remarkable and worthy of notice. (Rom. xi. 27; Heb. viii. 8-12; x. 16.)

But we must observe the order and manner of teaching here pursued. The Prophet confirms what I have before said, that what we have been considering was incredible to the Jews. Having then already spoken of the benefits of God, which could have been hardly recognised by the senses of men, in order to obviate the want of faith, he adds, that the Lord would manifest his mercy towards them in a new and unusual manner. We hence see why the Prophet added this passage to his former doctrine. For had he not spoken of a new covenant, those miserable men, whom he sought to inspire with the hope of salvation, would have ever vacillated; nay, as the greater part were already overwhelmed with despair, he would have effected nothing. Here then he sets before them a new covenant, as though he had said, that they ought not to look farther or higher, nor to measure the benefit of God, of which he had spoken, by the appearance of the state of things at that time, for God would make a *new covenant.*

There is yet no doubt but that he commends the favour of God, which was afterwards to be manifested in the fulness of time. Besides, we must ever bear in mind, that from the time the people returned to their own country, the faith of those who had embraced the favour of deliverance was assailed by the most grievous trials, for it would have been better for them to continue in perpetual exile than to be cruelly harassed by all their neighbours, and to be exposed to so many troubles. If, then, the people had been only restored from their exile in Babylon, it was a matter of small moment; but it behoved the godly to direct their minds to Christ. And hence we see that the Prophets, who performed the office of teaching after the restoration, dwelt on this point,—that they were to hope for something better than what then appeared, and that they were not to despond, be-

cause they saw that they did not enjoy rest, and were drawn into weary and grievous contests rather than freed from tyranny. We indeed know what Haggai says of the future temple, and what Zechariah says, and also Malachi. And the same was the object of our Prophet in speaking of the new covenant, even that the faithful, after having enjoyed again their own country, might not clamour against God, because he did not bestow on them that happiness which he had promised. This was the second reason why the Prophet spoke of the new covenant.

As before, he now repeats the words, that *the days would come*, in which God would make a covenant with Israel as well as with Judah. For the ten tribes, as it is well known, had been driven into exile while the kingdom of Judah was still standing. Besides, when they revolted from the family of David, they became as it were another nation. God indeed did not cease to acknowledge them as his people; but they had alienated themselves as far as they could from the Church. God then promises that there would be again one body, for He would gather them that they might unite together, and not be like two houses.

Now, as to the *new* covenant, it is not so called, because it is contrary to the first covenant; for God is never inconsistent with himself, nor is he unlike himself. He then who once made a covenant with his chosen people, had not changed his purpose, as though he had forgotten his faithfulness. It then follows, that the first covenant was inviolable; besides, he had already made his covenant with Abraham, and the Law was a confirmation of that covenant. As then the Law depended on that covenant which God made with his servant Abraham, it follows that God could never have made a new, that is, a contrary or a different covenant. For whence do we derive our hope of salvation, except from that blessed seed promised to Abraham? Further, why are we called the children of Abraham, except on account of the common bond of faith? Why are the faithful said to be gathered into the bosom of Abraham? Why does Christ say, that some will come from the east and the west, and sit down in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob? (Luke xvi. 22; Matt. viii. 11.) These things no doubt sufficiently shew that God has never made any other covenant than that which he made formerly with Abraham, and at length confirmed by the hand of Moses. This subject might be more fully handled; but it is enough briefly to shew, that the covenant which God made at first is perpetual.

Let us now see why he promises to the people a *new* covenant. It being new, no doubt refers to what they call the form; and the form, or manner, regards not words only, but first Christ, then the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the whole external way of teaching. But the substance remains the same. By substance I understand the doctrine; for God in the Gospel brings forward nothing but what the Law contains. We hence see that God has so spoken from the beginning, that he has not changed, no not a syllable, with regard to the substance of the doctrine. For he has included in the Law the rule of a perfect life, and has also shewn what is the way of salvation, and by types and figures led the people to Christ, so that the remission of sin is there clearly made manifest, and whatever is necessary to be known.

As then God has added nothing to the Law as to the substance of the doctrine, we must come, as I have already said, to the form, as Christ was not as yet manifested: God made a new covenant, when he accomplished through his Son whatever had been shadowed forth under the Law. For the sacrifices could not of themselves pacify God, as it is well known, and whatever the Law taught respecting expiation was of itself useless and of no importance. The new covenant then was made when Christ appeared with water and blood, and really fulfilled what God had exhibited under types, so that the faithful might have some taste of salvation. But the coming of Christ would not have been sufficient, had not regeneration by the Holy Spirit been added. It was, then, in some respects, a new thing, that God regenerated the faithful by his Spirit, so that it became not only a doctrine as to the letter, but also efficacious, which not only strikes the ear, but penetrates into the heart, and really forms us for the service of God. The outward mode of teaching was also new, as it is evident to all; for when we

compare the Law with the Gospel, we find that God speaks to us now openly, as it were face to face, and not under a veil, as Paul teaches us, when speaking of Moses, who put on a veil when he went forth to address the people in God's name. (2 Cor. iii. 13.) It is not so, says Paul, under the Gospel, but the veil is removed, and God in the face of Christ presents himself to be seen by us. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet calls it a *new* covenant, as it will be shewn more at large: for I touch only on things which cannot be treated apart, that the whole context of the Prophet may be better understood. Let us then proceed now with the words.

He says that the *covenant* which he will make will not be such as he *had made with* their *fathers*. Here he clearly distinguishes the new covenant from the Law. The contrast ought to be borne in mind; for no one of the Jews thought it possible that God would add anything better to the Law. For though they regarded the Law almost as nothing, yet we know that hypocrites pretended with great ardour of zeal that they were so devoted to the Law, that they thought that heaven and earth could sooner be blended together, than that any change should be made in the Law; and at the same time they held most tenaciously what God had only for a time instituted. It was therefore necessary that the Law should be here contrasted with the new covenant, that the Jews might know that the favour in reserve for them would be far more excellent than what had been formerly manifested to the fathers. This, then, is the reason why he says, not according to the *covenant*, &c.

He afterwards adds, *which I made with their fathers when I laid hold on their hand*, &c. Here he shews that they could never have a firm hope of salvation, unless God made a new covenant. Such was their pride, that they hardly would have received the favour of God, had they not been convinced of this truth: for this would have been always in their mouth, "Did not God shew himself a Father to his people when he redeemed them? was it not a testimony of his paternal favour? has he not elevated the condition of the Church, which he designs to be perpetual?" They would

have therefore rejected the favour of God, had not the Prophet openly declared that the Law had been and would be still useless to them, and that there was therefore a necessity for a new covenant, otherwise they must have perished.

We now perceive the design of the Prophet; and this ought to be carefully observed; for it would not be enough to know what the Prophet says, except we also know why he says this or that. The meaning then is, that it ought not to appear strange that God makes a new covenant, because the first had been useless and was of no avail. Then he confirms this, because God made the first covenant when he stretched out his hand to his ancient people, and became their liberator; and yet they *made void* that covenant. The circumstance as to the time ought to be noticed, for the memory of a recent benefit ought to be a most powerful motive to obedience. For how base an ingratitude it was for those, who had been delivered by the wonderful power of God, to reject his covenant at a time when they had been anticipated by divine mercy? As then they had made void even at that time the covenant of God, it may with certainty be concluded, that there had been no time in which they had not manifested their impiety, and had not been covenant-breakers.

He adds, *I however ruled over them*, or was Lord over them. Though some confine the verb בעלתי, *bolti*, to the rule exercised by a husband, and this would not be unsuitable, as God not only ruled then over his people, but was also their husband, a similitude which is often used; yet I know not whether this view can be satisfactorily sustained We ought therefore to be satisfied with the general truth, that God had the people under his own authority, as though he had said, that he only used his own right in ruling over them and prescribing to them the way in which they were to live. At the same time the word covenant, was more honourable to the people. For when a king enjoins anything on his people, it is called an edict; but God deals with his own people more kindly, for he descends and appears in the midst of them, that he may bind himself to his people, as he binds the people to himself. We hence see, in short, why God says that

he *ruled over* the people, even because he had purchased them for himself, and yet he had not enjoyed his own right on account of the untameable and perverse disposition of the people.[1]

It ought at the same time to be observed, that the fault is here cast on the people, that the Law was weak and not sufficiently valid, as we see that Paul teaches us in Rom. vii. 12. For as soon as the weakness of the Law is spoken of, the greater part lay hold of something they deem wrong in the Law, and thus the Law is rendered contemptible: hence the Prophet says here that *they* had made God's *covenant void,* as though he had said, that the fault was not to be sought in the Law that there was need of a new covenant, for the Law was abundantly sufficient, but that the fault was in the levity and the unfaithfulness of the people. We now then see that nothing is detracted from the Law when it is said to be weak and ineffectual; for it is an accidental fault derived from men who do not observe nor keep their pledged faith. There are still more things to be said; but I now, as I have said, touch but briefly on the words of the Prophet. It then follows,—

33. But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

33. Quia hoc fœdus quod percutiam cum domo Israel post dies illos, dicit Jehova, ponam legem meam in medio ipsorum (*id est,* in visceribus,) et in cordibus ipsorum scribam eam; et ego ero illis in Deum, et ipsi erunt mihi in populum.

He now shews a difference between the Law and the Gospel, for the Gospel brings with it the grace of regeneration: its doctrine, therefore, is not that of the letter, but penetrates into the heart and reforms all the inward faculties, so that obedience is rendered to the righteousness of God.

[1] This clause, as quoted in Heb. viii. 9, is, "And I regarded them not," according to the *Sept.* and the *Syr.*, though the *Vulg.* is the same with our version. *Houbigant* says, "Read נעלתי, I have rejected, I have repudiated." The only difference is in one letter; and this word is used by Jeremiah in ch. xiv. 19. There would thus be a perfect correspondence, "and I rejected them, saith Jehovah."

"Which my covenant," in the previous clause, is the *Vulg.*; but according to the *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Targ.*, it is, "because they have broken my covenant," &c. אשר is not used, as given in our version, in connection with a noun that follows, though it is so used with pronouns.—*Ed.*

A question may however be here moved, Was the grace of regeneration wanting to the Fathers under the Law? But this is quite preposterous. What, then, is meant when God denies here that the Law was written on the heart before the coming of Christ? To this I answer, that the Fathers, who were formerly regenerated, obtained this favour through Christ, so that we may say, that it was as it were transferred to them from another source. The power then to penetrate into the heart was not inherent in the Law, but it was a benefit transferred to the Law from the Gospel. This is one thing. Then we know that this grace of God was rare and little known under the Law; but that under the Gospel the gifts of the Spirit have been more abundantly poured forth, and that God has dealt more bountifully with his Church. But still the main thing is, to consider what the Law of itself is, and what is peculiar to the Gospel, especially when a comparison is made between the Law and the Gospel. For when this comparison ceases, this cannot be properly applied to the Law; but with regard to the Gospel it is said, that the Law is that of the letter, as it is called elsewhere, (Rom. vii. 6;) and this also is the reason why Paul calls it the letter in 2 Cor. iii. 6, "the letter killeth," &c. By "letter" he means not what Origen foolishly explained, for he perverted that passage as he did almost the whole Scripture: Paul does not mean there the simple and plain sense of the Law; for he calls it the letter for another reason, because it only sets before the eyes of men what is right, and sounds it also in their ears. And the word *letter* refers to what is written, as though he had said, The Law was written on stones, and was therefore a letter. But the Gospel—what is it? It is spirit, that is, God not only addresses his word to the ears of men and sets it before their eyes, but he also inwardly teaches their hearts and minds. This is then the solution of the question: the Prophet speaks of the Law in itself, as apart from the Gospel, for the Law then is dead and destitute of the Spirit of regeneration.

He afterwards says, *I will put my Law in their inward parts.* By these words he confirms what we have said, that the newness, which he before mentioned, was not so as to

the substance, but as to the form only: for God does not say here, "I will give you another Law," but *I will write my Law*, that is, the same Law, which had formerly been delivered to the Fathers. He then does not promise anything different as to the essence of the doctrine, but he makes the difference to be in the form only. But he states the same thing in two ways, and says, that he would *put* his *law in their inward parts*, and that he would *write* it *in their hearts*.[1] We indeed know how difficult it is that man should be so formed to obedience that his whole life may be in unison with the Law of God, for all the lusts of the flesh are so many enemies, as Paul says, who fight against God. (Rom. viii. 7.) As then all our affections and lusts thus carry on war with God, it is in a manner a renovation of the world when men suffer themselves to be ruled by God. And we know what Scripture says, that we cannot be the disciples of Christ, except we renounce ourselves and the world, and deny our own selves. (Matt. vi. 24; Luke xiv. 26, 27.) This is the reason why the Prophet was not satisfied with one statement, but said, *I will put my Law in their inward parts, I will write it in their hearts.*

We may further learn from this passage, how foolish the Papists are in their conceit about free-will. They indeed allow that without the help of God's grace we are not capable of fulfilling the Law, and thus they concede something to the aid of grace and of the Spirit: but still they not only imagine a co-operation as to free-will, but ascribe to it the main work. Now the Prophet here testifies that it is the

[1] All the nouns in Hebrew are of the singular number,—"law, inward part, heart," and also "iniquity and sin;" and so are they in the *Vulg.*, except the second, which is rendered "bowels;" but in the other versions and the *Targ.*, they are mostly pluralized. The words as quoted in Hebrews are not exactly according to any of the versions, but for the most part according to that of the *Sept.*

There is in many copies a ו before נתתי, "I have put," by which it is turned into a future, "I will even put." This seems to be the true reading,—

I will even put my law in their inmost part,
And on their heart will I write it.

It is the same as if it was said, "I will put my law in the inmost part of each of them:" the persons are individualized, in order to shew that the act extends to every one alike.—*Ed.*

peculiar work of God to write his Law in our hearts. Since God then declares that this favour is justly his, and claims to himself the glory of it, how great must be the arrogance of men to appropriate this to themselves? To *write* the Law *in the heart* imports nothing less than so to form it, that the Law should rule there, and that there should be no feeling of the heart, not conformable and not consenting to its doctrine. It is hence then sufficiently clear, that no one can be turned so as to obey the Law, until he be regenerated by the Spirit of God; nay, that there is no inclination in man to act rightly, except God prepares his heart by his grace; in a word, that the doctrine of the letter is always dead, until God vivifies it by his Spirit.

He adds, *And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.* Here God comprehends generally the substance of his covenant; for what is the design of the Law, except that the people should call upon him, and that he should also exercise a care over his people? For whenever God declares that he will be our God, he offers to us his paternal favour, and declares that our salvation is become the object of his care; he gives to us a free access to himself, bids us to recumb on his grace, and, in short, this promise contains in itself everything needful for our salvation. The case is now also at this day the same under the Gospel; for as we are aliens from the kingdom of heaven, he reconciles us by it to himself, and testifies that he will be our God. On this depends what follows, *And they shall be my people;* for the one cannot be separated from the other. By these words then the Prophet briefly intimates, that the main object of God's covenant is, that he should become our Father, from whom we are to seek and expect salvation, and that we should also become his people. Of these things there is more to be said again; but I have explained the reason why I now so quickly pass over things worthy of a longer explanation. He adds,—

34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the

34. Et non docebit amplius vir (*id est*, quisque) proximum suum, et quisque fratrum suum, dicendo, cognoscite Jehovam; quia omnes cognoscent me à parvo ipsorum, et (*sed*

greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

abundat copula) ad magnum ipsorum, dicit Jehova; quia ignoscam peccatis ipsorum, et iniquitatum ipsorum non recordabor amplius.

But I cannot now proceed farther, for the clock strikes.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast favoured us with so singular a benefit as to make through thy Son a covenant which has been ratified for our salvation,—O grant, that we may become partakers of it, and know that thou so speakest with us, that thou not only shewest by thy Word what is right, but speakest also to us inwardly by thy Spirit, and thus renderest us teachable and obedient, that there may be an evidence of our adoption, and a proof that thou wilt govern and rule us, until we shall at length be really and fully united to thee through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth.

And no more shall every one teach his neighbour, and every one his brother, saying, Know ye Jehovah; for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more. Here is mentioned another difference between the old and the new covenant, even that God, who had obscurely manifested himself under the Law, would send forth a fuller light, so that the knowledge of him would be commonly enjoyed. But he hyperbolically extols this favour, when he says that no one would have need of a teacher or instructor, as every one would have himself sufficient knowledge. We therefore consider that the object of the Prophet is mainly to shew, that so great would be the light of the Gospel, that it would be clearly evident, that God under it deals more bountifully with his people, because its truth shines forth as the sun at noon-day. The same thing Isaiah promises, when he says that all would become the disciples of God. (Is. liv. 13.) This was indeed the case also under the

Law, though God gave then but a small taste of heavenly doctrine: but at the coming of Christ he unfolded the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so that under the Gospel there is the perfection of what had been begun; for we know that the ancient people were like children, and hence God kept them in the rudiments of knowledge: now, as we are grown up, he favours us with a fuller doctrine, and he comes, as it were, nearer to us.

Hence, he says, *No more shall every one teach his neighbour, and a man his brother.*[1] I have said that the Prophet here amplifies the favour of God. But we find that some fanatics have ignorantly and foolishly abused this passage, seeking to put down teaching of every kind, as the Anabaptists in our day, who reject all teaching; and flattering themselves in their ignorance, they proudly boast that they are endued with the Spirit, and say, that dishonour is done to Christ, if we are still disciples, because it is written as one of the praises and encomiums given to the new covenant, that *no one shall teach his neighbour any more.* And hence it has also happened, that they are inebriated with strange and horrible doctrines: for the devil, when they become swollen with so much pride, can fascinate and delude them as he pleases; and their own pride also so leads them astray, that they invent dreams; and many unprincipled men have drawn aside this passage to serve their own purposes. For when they boast themselves to be prophets, and persuade the simple that they are so, they hold many attached to themselves, and derive gain by this sort of boasting.

But the Prophet here does not mean inspiration, nor does he exclude the practice of teaching, as I have already said; he only shews to us the superior brightness of the gospel light, as God, under the Law, did not so perfectly teach his people as he does us at this day. And hence is that saying

[1] Literally the words are,—

And they shall teach no more, a man his neighbour,
And a man his brother, by saying,
"Know ye Jehovah;"
For all of them shall know me,
From the least of them to the greatest of them,
Saith Jehovah.

of Christ, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see, and the ears which hear the things which ye hear; for many kings and prophets," &c. (Luke x. 23.) Christ, then, is the best interpreter of this passage, even that God would cause the truth to shine forth more fully under the Gospel; and hence Christ is called by Malachi "the Sun of Righteousness," (Mal. iv. 2;) for the Prophet there intimates that the Fathers had indeed some light, but not such as we have. In short, we ought to bear in mind the comparison, of which mention was made yesterday, even that God held his people in suspense with the hope of a better state.

And that we may no farther seek an explanation, let us carefully weigh the words; for it is not simply and without exception said, "No one shall teach his neighbour," but it it is added, "*Saying, Know ye Jehovah.*" We hence see that the Prophet promises knowledge, so that they might be no longer alphabetarians; for these words, "Know ye Jehovah," point out the first elements of faith, or of celestial doctrine. And, doubtless, if we consider how great was the ignorance of the ancient people, they were then only in the elements. He who is at this day the least among the faithful, has so far advanced, that he knows much more clearly what pertains chiefly to salvation than those who were then the most learned. The meaning then is, that all God's chosen people would be so endued with the gift of knowledge, that they would no longer continue in the first elements.

Now, were any one pertinaciously to urge this one clause, it would be right to set before him a passage in Isaiah, for he certainly speaks of the kingdom of Christ, when he says, "Lay hold shall each on the hand of his neighbour, and say, Come, let us ascend into the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us his ways," &c. (Isa. ii. 3.) Now, let us reconcile these two prophecies. The design of both is to set forth the favour of God, manifested by Christ at his coming. The one passage says, "No one will teach his neighbour;" and the other, "Lay-hold will each on the hand of his neighbour, and say, Let us come and ascend into the mountain, that Jehovah may teach us." Now the way of recon-

ciling them is this,—that Jeremiah says, that the people would not be so ignorant under the new covenant as to stand in need of the first principles of truth ; but that Isaiah says, that each would lay hold on the hand of his neighbour, that they might mutually help one another, so as to attain the knowledge of God's law. The question is thus solved ; and we, at the same time, see how remarkable is the benefit with which God favours his people, as he thus makes himself familiarly known to them.

He says, *All shall know me, from the least to the greatest.* He does not mean that knowledge would be in all in an equal measure. Experience indeed proves this to be false; and further we know, that God has testified from the beginning, as Paul also reminds us, (Rom. xii. 2, 3,) that the measure of his gifts is according to his good pleasure. But the Prophet means, that those who are the least or the lowest among God's people shall be endued with so much light of knowledge that they will be almost like teachers. To the same purpose is the prophecy of Joel, " Prophesy shall your sons, your daughters shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (Joel ii. 28.) He promises that there would be everywhere prophets and teachers, because the grace of God would be at that day more abundant ; and these things ought ever to be understood comparatively. Though, then, many are now ignorant among the children of God, and among those who are really of the number of the faithful, yet if we consider how great was the obscurity of the Law, those who are at this day the least among the disciples, are not otherwise than prophets and teachers. And for this reason Christ says, " He who is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than John the Baptist," who yet was superior to all the Prophets. (Matt. xi. 11.) John the Baptist was, in his office, exalted above all the Prophets, and he excelled them in knowledge ; and yet the least of those who professed the Gospel and bore testimony to it, was greater, says Christ, than John the Baptist. And this is not to be applied only to them individually, nor be confined to them, but rather to the clear and plain doctrine which the Gospel conveys, according to the passage we quoted yesterday,

where Paul says that there is now no veil intervening, but that we are allowed to see God, as it were, face to face in the person of Christ. (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

It follows, *For I will forgive their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.* The Prophet, no doubt, shews here the foundation of God's kindness, even that he would receive the people into favour by not imputing to them their sins. If we then seek for the origin of the new covenant, it is the free remission of sins, because God reconciles himself to his people. And we hence conclude, that there is no other cause that we can imagine, why God appeared in his only-begotten Son, and manifested so great a bounty: for the Prophet here reduces to nothing all the glory of the flesh, and lays prostrate all merits, when he says, that God would be so bountiful to his people as to become propitious to them, freely to remit their sins, and not to remember their iniquities. This passage, then, cannot properly be taken as referring to the perpetual remission of sins, though this he included in the general doctrine; but we must bear in mind the design of the Prophet, which was to shew, that God from the beginning, with regard to his Church, was moved by no other cause than a desire to abolish sins.

The Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, gives rather a refined interpretation of this passage, for he dwells on the word *more*, עוֹד, *od.* He says, that under the New Testament God forgives iniquities, because expiation has been made, so that there is no more need of sacrifices. For he assumes the opposite idea, that God remembered iniquities until he made the new covenant. If he remembered sins, he says, until he made a new covenant, it is no wonder that he then required daily sacrifice to propitiate him: but now under the New Testament he remembers them no more. Then sacrifices cease, because there is now no need of satisfaction when sins are forgiven. He hence concludes, that we have been so expiated by the blood of Christ, and so reconciled to God, that confidence as to our salvation ought to give us an entire rest. But we ought to bear in mind what I have said, that the Prophet here expressly, and in the first place, speaks of the beginning of the mercy and grace which God promises;

he therefore declares that God would be so kind and so gracious as not to *remember iniquities.*

What, then, does the particle *more* intimate? Even that God had for a time been angry with his people, and visited their sins with judgment. For God is said to call our sins to remembrance, he is said to be angry with us, he is said to be the avenger of our iniquities, when he punishes us, when he gives evidences of his severity and of his vengeance. Whenever then God severely handled his people, he seemed to remember their iniquities; but when he made the new covenant, all iniquities were then buried, and cast, as another Prophet says, into the depths of the sea. (Mic. vii. 19.) Then the Apostle misapplied the testimony of the Prophet: by no means; for he wisely accommodated it to the subject he was discussing: what God promises, that he would not any more remember iniquities, after having made the new covenant, was accomplished through the coming of Christ. Then Christ alone has effected this—that our iniquities should no more be remembered before God. Hence also we easily learn what the Apostle intended to prove, even that sacrifices cease when sins are expiated. These things indeed harmonize well together, and there is nothing forced or too refined.

Moreover, the Prophet does not here discuss the whole question respecting the difference between the Old and New Testament, but only takes this as granted, that the grace of God would be more abundant than formerly, in order that the faithful, supported by hope, might patiently endure their evils and most grievous trials with which they had to contend, and not despond until Christ was manifested, as we said yesterday. Here, then, he speaks of the grace of regeneration, of the gift of knowledge, and at the same time promises that God would be propitious to his people in a different and more perfect way than he had been in former times. But the Apostle in that Epistle seems to apply this to ceremonies, because these things are connected together; that is, the abrogation of ceremonies and the regeneration of the Spirit which is promised here. Then the Apostle does not wrest the words of the Prophet; but as he com-

mends the new covenant, which was to be more excellent than the Law, he hence concludes, that it is no wonder that ceremonies were not to continue but for a time. For he assumes this principle, that a new covenant was to succeed the old: then some change was necessarily to be. He assumes also that the new covenant was opposed to the old, and that the old was subject to destruction. The Jews could not endure any change in the types, for they would have them to remain the same. But the Apostle says that it is nothing strange that a thing should decay; for God, he says, does not certainly without reason call that covenant old which he made by Moses; then it will not always continue valid. (Heb. viii. 13.) Since it is so, it cannot be inconsistent with the truth and faithfulness of God, that the ceremonies should cease as to their use, while the Law itself remained unchanged. We now then see that the Apostle faithfully interpreted the design of the Prophet by accommodating his testimony to the abrogation of ceremonies.

But as I have to explain only the words of the Prophet, there is no need to speak further of the difference between the Old and New Testament, that is, in what particulars they differ; for the Old and New Testament differ also in other things. But the Prophet, as I have said, thought it sufficient to touch on this point,—that something better was to be hoped at the coming of Christ than what the Fathers in all ages had found. And thus, as I have said, he sought to alleviate the sorrow of the faithful, whom God exercised with hard trials before Christ was manifested in the flesh.

Moreover, the Law and the Gospel form a contrast like Moses and Christ. Then the New Testament is more excellent than the Law, as Christ excels Moses. But we must come to a passage in John, that we may more fully understand why the Prophet says that the grace of the new covenant would be different from that of the old. John says, "The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.) John seems there to leave nothing to the Law but an evanescent shadow. For if Christ only brought truth to us, then there was no truth in the Law, and there was no grace in the Law; but this seems

to cast a reproach on the Law. Now this question was in part answered yesterday. But as I wish to finish this passage, let it be briefly observed, that whenever the Law is thus extenuated, it is only that the benefit of Christ may be set forth, so that we may know how invaluable is God's mercy which appears in his only-begotten Son.

Were now any one to object and say, "But why had he previously published the Law? and why did he command it to be reverently received, if it was without grace and truth?" To this I answer, according to what I said yesterday, that the Law was not destitute of those benefits which we at this day receive under the Gospel, but that these benefits were then, as it were, adventitious, and that they do not properly belong to the Law; for if the Law were separated from the Gospel, it would be the same as if one was to separate Moses from Christ. If Moses be regarded, not as opposed to Christ, he was the herald and witness of God's paternal kindness towards his people; his doctrine also contained promises of a free salvation, and opened to the faithful the door of access to God. But if Moses be set in opposition to Christ, he becomes the minister of death, and his doctrine leads to destruction; for the letter, as Paul in 2 Cor. iii. 6, calls it, killeth,—how so? Because whosoever is attached to Moses departs from Christ; and Christ alone possesses in himself the fulness of all blessings. It then follows, that nothing remains in Moses when considered in himself. But God promised salvation to his ancient people, and also regenerated his chosen, and illuminated them by his Spirit. This he did not do so freely and extensively as now. As then God's grace is at this day more abundant, it is justly extolled in high terms by all the Prophets; and then, as I have already said, whatever God at that time conferred, was, as it were, adventitious, for all these benefits were dependant on Christ and the promulgation of the Gospel. Let us now proceed,—

35. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the

35. Sic dicit Jehova, Qui ponit solem (*vel*, posuit) in lucem diei, et leges (*vel*, statuta, decreta) lunæ et stellarum in lucem noctis; scindens mare, et resonant (tumult tur-

waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts *is* his name:

36. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

fluctus ejus; Jehova exercituum nomen ejus:

36. Si remota fuerint decreta hæc a conspectu meo, dicit Jehova, etiam semen Israel cessabit (*vel*, deficiet,) ne sit gens coram facie mea cunctis diebus.

He confirms the promises which we have been considering; for it was difficult to believe that the people would not only recover what they had lost, but also be made much more happy; for the Church was then wholly in a desponding state. It was not then an easy matter to raise, as it were, from the lowest depths a miserable people, and to comfort them so that they might overcome their dreadful trial; for the disorder of the Church was such, that had it been raised a hundred times from the dead, it might again be a hundred times crushed into death, for there still remained for it most grievous evils in future. This is then the reason why the Prophet dwells at large on proving the same thing.

He says in the person of God, "I am he who created the sun, the moon, and the stars; the regular order of things in creation still continues, for the sun performs its course, and so does the moon." He speaks, indeed, of their diurnal course, for we know that the Prophets spoke popularly, and according to the common notions. Had they philosophized, as astrologers do, and spoken of the monthly course of the moon, and of the annual course of the sun, they could not have been understood by the common people. They were, therefore, satisfied to state things which even children could comprehend, even that the sun made its circuit daily round the world, that the moon did the same, and that the stars in their turns followed; so that the moon holds the first place in the night among the stars, and that the sun rules during the day. "I am the Lord," he says, "who have fixed this order of things which still remains:" *I cut* or divide *the sea*, he says, that is, I stir it up with tempests, *and make a noise*, or roar, *do its waves.*"

He mentions things which are contrary, but not inconsistent, though different. For the course of the sun, moon, and stars is regular and fixed, and so he calls their courses

חקת, *cheket*, and החקים, *echekim*, that is, decrees, which are not changeable.[1] Then in the heavens we find an order so arranged and regulated, that nothing deviates from its appointed course. But in storms and tempests God seems as though he would shake the world and overturn what appears otherwise immovable; for even the very rocks, as it were, tremble when the sea is violently stirred up; and yet God calms the very sea, and thus puts an end to storms and tempests, so that there ever appears to be a stability and a perpetuity in nature. He then adds, *If removed shall these laws be from my presence, the seed of Israel shall also fail;* that is, "As certain as is the stability of the order of nature, seen in the course of the sun and the moon, and in the turbulent sea, so certain will be the deliverance of my Church, nor can it ever be destroyed." The tempest on the sea seems to shake the world, and yet the world remains fixed. The sun and moon, when they rise, might overwhelm the whole earth; for we know that the sun is much larger than the earth. While so large a body, and almost immeasurable, hangs over our heads, and rolls on so swiftly, who ought not to be afraid? Yet the sun proceeds in its course, and the earth remains firm, because it so pleases God. There is, therefore, no reason to fear that the safety of the Church should ever fail, for the laws or decrees of nature shall never cease; that is, God, who has from the beginning governed the world, will not disregard the welfare of his Church, for whose sake the world has been created.

Nor, indeed, is it a matter of wonder, that the safety of

[1] "Ordinance," and "ordinances," would perhaps be the best words. The word means a fixed order of things, sometimes rendered in our version "statute," and sometimes "ordinance,"—

Thus saith Jehovah,—
He who hath appointed the sun for light by day,
The ordinance of the moon and stars for light by night,
Who calms the sea when roar do its waves,—
Jehovah of hosts is his name,

Two opposite meanings are given by many Lexicons to רגע,—to divide, to break, to cleave, and also to give rest, to calm. *Parkhurst* holds that it has only the last. However, that it means here to make quiet, or to calm, is most probable, as God's restraining power as to the sea is mentioned before in ch. v. 22 as a proof of his greatness.

The word for "ordinance" before "moon" is left out in the *Sept.*, and in one MS.; and the passage would read better without it.—*Ed.*

the Church is here shewn to be so secure, for it may justly be preferred even to the fixed course of the sun and of the moon, and to other institutions of nature. But God deemed it enough in this place to use this comparison, according to what is said in the Psalms, where the sun and the moon are called his faithful witnesses in heaven. (Ps. lxxxix. 36, 37.) But there also the covenant is spoken of, which God was about to make with his people through his only-begotten Son. He mentions the moon as his witness in heaven; but as I have already said elsewhere, he raises us far above the world and above all the elements, yea, above the sun and the moon, when he treats of the certainty of our salvation; and, doubtless, the condition of the Church does not depend on the state of the world; for it is said in another place, "They shall grow old, but thou wilt remain for ever." (Ps. cii. 26-28.) And the Prophet there compares the heavens to garments, which wear out by use, and at length become useless; but the condition of the Church, he says, is far different. He does not, indeed, express these words; but after having said, "Thou, O God, art the same from eternity," he comes to the eternity of the Church, "Thy children's children shall endure." We now see that the Church has the preference over the whole world. But God had a regard in this place to the weakness of his people, when he said that his grace to his people would be as sure and certain as the institutions of nature. Some refer the last clause in verse 35 to the Red Sea; because God divided the Red Sea; but this is wholly foreign to the meaning of the Prophet, nor does it require any confutation; but I have pointed it out that no one may be led astray.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we enjoy the light of the sun by day, and of the moon by night, we may learn to raise higher our eyes, and not be like the unbelieving, who have this benefit in common with us, but look forward in hope of our eternal salvation, nor doubt but that as thou settest before our eyes a proof of thy immovable constancy in these created things, so also secure and certain shall be our salvation, which is founded on thy most

certain truth, which renders sure all things, until at length we come into that blessed kingdom, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth.

37. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

37. Sic dicit Jehova, Si mensurentur cœli sursum, et investigentur fundamenta terræ deorsum, etiam ego rejiciam (*vel*, spernam) totum semen Israel, propter omnia quæ fecerunt, dicit Jehova.

He confirms the same thing by another comparison, even that it would be impossible for God wholly to forget his covenant, but that he would again gather his people. Exile might indeed appear as a permanent death; and thus the truth of God might have been brought to nothing; and the covenant could not have been made void without giving the people a sort of right to complain, that they had been deceived. For we know, that though a condition was added to the covenant, yet it was not founded on the integrity of men; and hence it is said, that God is not a liar, though all the Jews were perfidious. (Rom. iii. 3, 4.) Then the Prophet teaches us here, that though God had severely punished the sins of the people, and had resolved to punish them in future, even so as to destroy their city, there would yet be a place for mercy after the people had been chastised.

He had said before that God's covenant with Abraham's children could no more fail than the laws of nature: he now says, that if any could measure the heaven, and investigate the foundations of the earth, that is, penetrate into the very centre of the earth, then, he says, *I will reject the seed of Israel.* But God brings before us these strange and impossible things, that we may know that he will at length be reconciled to his people after having justly punished them. And this promise could not have afforded any consolation to hypocrites, because God does not include the whole seed of Abraham, but says, that he would not allow the whole seed of Abraham to perish, for some remnant would continue, according to what is said by Isaiah, "Though thy people were

as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." (Isa. x. 22.) God then does not here affirm that he would be merciful to all, but that there would be still some remaining, so that the name of the people would continue immortal: in short, he promises that the Church would be saved, but that the number would be small.

We now perceive the design of the Prophet: he doubtless had regard to the faithful, who might have been overwhelmed with despair, on seeing themselves driven far away from their own country, and having no hope of a return. Then he testifies that God had such a care for the safety of the faithful, that he would gather the scattered seed.

But we must bear in mind what we have said, that this promise is to be confined to the elect alone, for they were alone capable of receiving this favour. As to the unbelieving, who were perverse in their wickedness, God might have wholly cut them off, and yet save the remnants of grace.

Now there is no need here to enter into a subtle discussion, whether the centre of the earth can be found out. The philosophers do indeed bring some probable reasons as to the extent of the heavens, and the dimension of the earth is also conjectured by them. But the Prophet's purpose was to declare, according to the common and popular mode of speaking, that God's mercy would be perpetual and immeasurable towards the children of Abraham, like the immensity of the earth and the heavens, which exceeds the comprehension of the human mind.

He adds, *On account of all the things which they have done;* that is, though they have deserved to die eternally a hundred times, I will yet have a regard to my covenant and my mercy. The Prophet then designedly sets before us here the sins of the people, that we may know that God's mercy would be very great, as that the whole mass of so many evils would not hinder God to forgive them. This is the reason why he says, *on account of all* the things which they have done. It now follows,—

38. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.

38. Ecce dies (*addunt alii* בא׳ם, *veniunt,*) dicit Jehova, et edificabitur urbs Jehovæ è turri Chananeel usque ad portam anguli:

39. And the measuring-line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

40. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, *shall be* holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down, any more for ever.

39. Et exibit adhuc funiculus mensuræ coram ipso (*vel*, coram ipsa porta) et usque ad collem Gazeb, et circumdabit Goathath,

40. Et omnem vallem (*alii legunt in nominativo casu*, et omnis vallis) cadaverum et cineris, et omnes regiones (*vel*, agri,) ad torrentem Kedron usque ad angulum portæ equorum versus orientem, sanctitas Jehovæ; non evelletur, et non destruetur amplius in perpetuum.

Here the Prophet speaks of the rebuilding of the city. I doubt not but that his object was to shew them that the largeness and splendour of the city after the return of the people would not be less than it had been under David in its most flourishing condition. We must, however, first speak of the words before we proceed to the subject.

Behold, the days are coming, saith Jehovah, and built shall be the city. It was not as yet destroyed; but the Prophet intimated that its utter ruin was nigh at hand; he therefore makes now their hope to depend on God's mercy alone, as to the deliverance of the people from exile: *Built* then *shall be the city to Jehovah from the tower of Hananeel*, &c. This tower was, no doubt, placed in the wall of the city. Almost the same prediction is found in Zech. xiv. 10, though there is some diversity in the words; but both the Prophets refer to the same thing. Zechariah's object was to animate the people under this circumstance, because the beauty, greatness, and extent of the city did not at first correspond with what it had formerly been. He then promises that its glory would at length be the same as it had been; and he names there the *tower of Hananeel.* Jeremiah adds, *to the gate of the corner.* The corner, הפנה, *ephene*, is in the singular number; but in Zechariah it is הפנים, *ephenim*, in the plural; and it is thought that corners or corner is thus called metaphorically, because a corner shews two faces while it stands out, and thus two parts appear; but whether it be the gate of the corner or of the corners, it makes but little difference.

He afterwards adds, *Yet go forth shall the line of measure before him.* Some apply this to the gate, because from the gate the line was to be extended to *the hill Gareb, and go*

round to Goath. Of these names of places I cannot say much, for we do not know the ancient situation of the city; and the Jews themselves, when they make conjectures about these uncertain things, shew only their own ignorance. However, the greater part of interpreters understand this,—that the city was to be large, as though God promised that he would extend it beyond the walls; and this they illicit from the verb יָצָא, *itsa, go forth shall the line,* or cord, *of measure.* But when the Prophet says *yet,* he compares the ancient greatness of the city with that which he perceives it to be hereafter. Then Zechariah seems to promise that it would be such a city as would contain the same measure; for he says, "Inhabited shall the city be under itself," or in its own place. (Zech. xii. 6.) As then Zechariah promises that the city would occupy the same place as formerly, I do not conclude anything else from the words of our Prophet, especially as the particle *yet* intimates the same thing. When it is said *before him,* I apply this to God and not to the gate; for mention is previously made of God, *Built shall be the city to Jehovah;* and then he adds, *before him.* I have no doubt but that the Prophet here bids the Israelites to raise up their eyes to God, that they might expect from him what was incredible according to the comprehension of men and of the flesh: then *before him,* that is, when God restores the city, then *Go forth shall the line,* that is, he will extend the line to *the hill Gareb, and surround Goath.*

He then adds, *And the whole valley.* Some read, "the whole valley shall be holiness to Jehovah:" and it may be suitably taken, that all the places near to the city were to be holy to God; but this verse may be connected with the preceding, as though he said, extended shall be the line to the *whole valley of the carcases and of the ashes.* The word דֶּשֶׁן, *dashin,* means ashes and fatness; but here it is to be taken for ashes; and it is thought that the place was so called, where they were wont to throw the ashes gathered from the altar, after the sacrifices were burnt: as then there was there a great heap of ashes, the place had this name given to it. Another place was also called the place of carcases, because there a host of enemies had been slain by an

angel, in the reign of Hezekiah. As then a great and a memorable slaughter had taken place there, it is thought that it received this name, in order that God's favour might remain known to posterity. If then this name became the monument of God's favour, Hezekiah, I have no doubt, was the cause of it.

It is then added, *and all the regions to the brook Kidron.* It is probable enough that the places here named were outside of the city, for we know that the brook Kidron was not within the city. Then he adds, *to the corner of the gate of the horses.* It is thought that through this gate went forth the chariots of the king when he wished to exercise his horses. It might have been the market-place for horses. Conjectures only have place here; for no one knows of a certainty whether the king had a place of exercise for his horses. But this gate looked towards the east. He says that all the places would be *holiness to Jehovah;* and then he promises them a quiet and a perpetual condition, *It shall not be cut off nor destroyed any more for ever;* for which it is said by Zechariah, "there shall be no more חֵרֶם, *cherim*, destruction."[1]

[1] The whole of this passage is differently rendered in the early versions and the *Targum;* some of them evidently wrong and some doubtful. *Blayney* gives the most literal and most consistent version. I give the following,—

38. Behold the days are coming, saith Jehovah,
That built shall the city be for (or to) Jehovah,
From the tower of Hananeel to the gate of the corner:
39. Yea, go forth again shall the measuring line
From over against it, over the hill of Gareb,
And shall surround Goath
40. And all the valley of the carcases and ashes,
And all the fields to the river Kidron,
To the corner of the gate of the horses eastward:
Holy to Jehovah, it shall not be rooted up,
Nor demolished any more for ever.

The 38th verse contains a general description; this is particularized in the following verses. The beginning of measuring was to be at "the tower of Hananeel;" hence "from over against it," or before it: the "gate" being feminine cannot be meant; it is then "the tower." As to the word for "fields," the reading of the *Keri* and of several MSS., countenanced by the *Vulg.*, ought no doubt to be adopted. "Eastward,"—thus the line came round to the same point where it began; for the tower of Hananeel was eastward. But what is referred to in the two last lines? The verbs are in the masculine gender, and "city" is feminine; and there is nothing in the passage with which they can agree except the tower of Hananeel. Then this tower seems to stand here for the rebuilt city; and then rooting

We now see the design of the Prophet: after having spoken of the return of the people, he adds that the city would again become splendid and large, as it had been; for the land continued in a state of disorder until the restoration of the city, as God had there chosen a habitation for himself. And as the Temple had been built there, it behoved the Israelites, wherever they dwelt, ever to direct their eyes to the Temple and the sanctuary of God, that they might live under his protection. Except, then, the city had been built again, the goodness of God could not have been really enjoyed; for a sort of desolation would have otherwise ever presented itself to the eyes of the people, as the city was as it were the banner under which God protected them. This then is the reason why the Prophet expressly announced this prophecy respecting the future restoration of the city.

Now, when he says that the *city would be built to Jehovah*, he intimates what was especially expected by the Jews, that that city would again be holy; for if it only flourished in wealth and power like other cities, it would have been but a small comfort to the Israelites. But he points out here a difference between Jerusalem and all heathen cities; for God was, as it were, the architect of that city, as it is said in the Psalms, "He himself founded it," (Ps. lxxxvii. 5;) and further, "His foundations are on the holy mountains," and this ought to be understood of himself. (Ps. lxxxvii. 1.) The meaning is, that God would again care for that city, as the Temple would become as it were his royal throne and earthly sanctuary. At the same time when the Prophet affirms that the extent of the city would not be less than it had been, we see that this prophecy must necessarily be referred to the kingdom of Christ: for though Jerusalem before Christ's coming was eminent and surrounded by a triple wall, and though it was celebrated through all the East, as even heathen writers say that it excelled every other city, yet it was never accomplished, that the city flourished as under David and Solomon.[1] We must then necessarily come to the spi-

up, *i.e.*, undermining the foundations, and demolishing, are suitably applied to a tower.—*Ed.*

[1] Some think, such as *Gataker* and *Blayney*, that according to the description here given, the dimensions of the city are much larger than what

ritual state of the city, and explain the promise as the grace which came through Christ.

But we must especially notice what is said, that it would be *holiness to Jehovah*, and also that no ruin or destruction would be dreaded any more. Had the condition of the elect people been the same as that of other nations, the promise of restoration would have been small and of no great moment; for it would have been better for them to dwell in exile where they inhabited a pleasant and fertile country. But the Prophet here commends a privilege with which God had favoured the children of Abraham above all other nations, when he adopted them as his peculiar people. There is however to be understood an implied contrast between the profanation which then prevailed, and the sanctification which is here promised. The Jews had so polluted the land that it differed nothing from other countries; and God, as Ezekiel says, had thence migrated, (Ezek. viii. 6;) and we know that the Temple was called by the prophets the den of robbers, (ch. vii. 11;) and that the city was also compared to Sodom and Gomorrah. (Is. i. 10.) Hence the Prophet here promises that the city, with its whole vicinity, would be holy to God, because God would cleanse it from all the defilements by which it had been polluted: and he also claims this as his own work, for to sanctify is a work peculiar to himself.

The promise of perpetual favour is added, as it is also done by Zechariah; for it would not be sufficient to have God's mercy promised to us for a short time, except its perpetuity were secured. The Prophet then promises now that the course of God's benefits would be permanent. The city indeed was again destroyed by Titus, and at length wholly demolished by Adrian; but this fact does not militate against this promise; for as we have said, God gave some taste of his favour in the external aspect of the city until Christ came; but after Christ was manifested, the heavenly Jerusalem be-

they had ever been before. The "line" was to inclose a part at least of the hill of Gareb, the whole of Goath, supposed to be Golgotha, the valley of the carcases, and the fields of Kidron, all which were formerly without the walls of the city.—*Ed.*

came the object to be sought, for all the types and shadows then ceased. The perpetuity then of which the Prophet speaks, is that which corresponds with the character of Christ's kingdom, and is therefore spiritual. Moreover, this passage teaches us that the Church will be perpetual, and that though God may permit it to be terribly shaken and tossed here and there, there will yet be ever some seed remaining, as long as the sun and the moon shall shine in the heavens, and the order of nature shall continue; so that all the elements, everything we see with our eyes, bear evidence to the perpetuity of the Church, even that it will ever continue: for though Satan and all the world daily threaten its ruin, yet the Lord will in a wonderful manner preserve it to the end, so that it will never perish. This is the import of the passage. Another prophecy follows.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which *was* the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar.

2. For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which *was* in the king of Judah's house.

3. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it.

1. Sermo qui datus fuit Jeremiæ à Jehova anno decimo Zedechiæ regis Jehudah; hic annus est decimus octavus Nabuchadnezer:

2. Et tunc exercitus regis Babylonii obsidebat Jerosolymam, et Jeremias propheta erat inclusus in atrio custodiæ quæ est in palatio regis Jehudah;

3. Quia incluserat ipsum Zedechias rex Jehudah, dicendo, Quare tu prophetizas dicendo, sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego trado urbem hanc in manum regis Babylonii, et capiet eam.

The Prophet here declares, that though he was shut up in prison, the Word of God was not bound, and that he himself was not less loose and free in his confinement than if he rambled through the whole city and visited all the lanes and the streets. He then did not desist from his office as a Prophet, though he was cast into prison. And thus we see that the course of heavenly truth cannot be impeded, how much soever the world may rage against all its ministers, and bind them in order to make them mute: and then also we see

here that the constancy of the Prophet was invincible, because he was not cast down with fear, though he was a captive and not beyond the reach of danger; for we find that even then he proceeded in the discharge of his office.

He points out then the circumstances of that time, and not without reason, when he says, that he was then *shut up in prison*, and also mentions the year, even the tenth of Zedekiah and the eighteenth of king Nebuchadnezar.[1] It was about the end of the ninth year that the army of Nebuchadnezar came up to Jerusalem; the city was besieged for two months in that year. The tenth year followed, in which this vision was given to the Prophet. The siege continued for a year and a half; but there was some interruption; for the Egyptians came to its aid. Thus for a short time, while the Chaldeans went to meet them, it had some liberty. But the Egyptians, as we shall hereafter see, were forced to retire in disgrace, and afterwards suffered punishment for their audacity and rashness. It was then about the middle of the siege that God, as we shall see, foretold to the Prophet the future return of the people. But though God shewed a regard for the miserable exiles, he yet at the same time confirmed what he had previously said of his future vengeance; for the people could not be restored before they had been driven into exile. It was indeed a dreadful instance of hardness and obduracy, that having been so often scourged they received no benefit. They had experienced the heavy judgment of God under Jehoiakim, and also under Jeconiah; but the memory of these calamities had soon vanished, and they lived as securely as though they had never heard a word from the mouth of Jeremiah: and he was not the only one who had threatened them, but there were before him Isaiah and others, and at the same time with him was Ezekiel, who had been exiled into Chaldea.

[1] The 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses ought to be put as parenthetical, as they only relate the circumstances connected with Jeremiah when he received the vision which he proceeds to relate in the 6th verse. Instead of "For then" in the 2d verse, "And then" would be more proper; and "Where" would be better than "For" at the beginning of the 3d verse, "Where Zedekiah had shut him up," &c. It is "In which" in the *Sept.* —*Ed.*

Then from the number of years we conclude how great must have been the obstinacy of the people.

At the same time we must observe how seasonable was this prophecy for alleviating the minds of the godly, as they were not far from extreme calamity; for it was in the eleventh year of Zedekiah and in the fourth month that the city was taken and demolished, the people driven into exile, and the Temple burnt. Then there were not more than six or seven months, perhaps, to the time of their utter ruin; there is indeed no mention made here of the month in which the Prophet received the vision, but the tenth year is only mentioned. Now, the city was taken at the beginning of the eleventh year, as we have stated. Hence then comes more fully to light the extreme perverseness of the people; for while the enemy surrounded the city, they held Jeremiah captive. He had already foretold many years past what experience then taught them to be true. For forty years he had not ceased to cry out and to strive by warning, exhorting, and threatening them to lead them to repentance. As then nothing new happened to them, and as they found by the evils which came on them that Jeremiah had been a true and faithful servant of God, what was their object in shutting him up in prison? was not this to carry on war with God? for what had they to do with Jeremiah? He had not evidently acted a private part, nor had he only dreamt of what he had so often foretold them. Then they did not fight with a mortal man, but like the giants they dared to raise up their horns against God himself.

For the same reason also, he calls himself a *Prophet.* This indeed he often did, but there is no doubt but that the indignity offered to him is pointed out, that even at the time when the Chaldeans surrounded the city with their army, Jeremiah the *Prophet* was shut up in the court of the prison. He might have only said, that Jeremiah was shut up, but for honour's sake he assumed the title of a Prophet, that hence might appear more evidently the baseness of the people's contumacy, that though they perceived that God was angry with them, they yet ceased not from their presumption; for they then held the Prophet in prison as though they were

fighting with God himself. We know that fools, according to the old proverb, being chastised, become wise. If then the Jews had a particle or a spark of wisdom, they might have been so subdued by evils and calamities as to cast aside their haughtiness and obstinacy. But we see that they were untameable, and through a mad fury persisted in their wickedness; for though besieged by their enemies, they yet attempted to hold God as it were captive in the person of his servant.

As to the *court* of the prison, I doubt not but it was a milder sort of imprisonment, for we shall hereafter see that the Prophet prayed that he might not be thence thrown into the dark prison where he had been. He sought it as no common favour to remain in some prison; and he was as yet exposed to the mockeries of all. However this may have been, we see that the people had then become nothing better, though they had already been chastised and scourged by God.

We ought at the same time to bear in mind what I have already said, that though the ungodly sought in all ways wholly to extinguish the word of God, they yet did not attain what they wished; for God broke through all hinderances, and continued the course of his word notwithstanding all their attempts. And this ought to be carefully noticed, for we see at this day all sorts of contrivances made by the wicked to impede the course of celestial truth. Let then this history be remembered, that though Jeremiah was a captive, yet his word was free and his tongue at liberty, as Paul also boasts, that though he was bound with chains, yet God's word was not bound. (2 Tim. ii. 9.)

Then the reason is added why he was shut up in prison,—he had dared to prophesy against the city and the king himself. It was no wonder that the king's mind was exasperated when Jeremiah boldly said that he would come into the hands of his enemies, for he had not only spoken of the ruin of the city, but also of the fall of the king; he had said that he would be brought before king Nebuchadnezar, and be led to Babylon, and be there until God visited him. We know how delicate are the ears of kings; it was then no

wonder Zedekiah became incensed against Jeremiah; but yet he ought to have been softened and humbled when he found that this oracle had come from God. That he then still kept Jeremiah a prisoner, proves his madness and stupidity, for he had no regard for God. I shall proceed with the subject to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we cease not daily to provoke thy wrath against us, we may be warned by thy word and repent, and so humble ourselves before thee that we may anticipate the rigour of thy judgment, and that being also chastised by thy hand, we may not become hardened, but be submissive to thee and teachable, and so profit under thy discipline, that being at length wholly devoted to thee, we may have no other object than to glorify thy holy name, until we shall become partakers of that glory which thine only-begotten Son has obtained for us.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth.

We began yesterday to speak of the presumption, and also of the madness of King Zedekiah in keeping the Prophet in prison, while he was yet besieged by his enemies, as it had been foretold. He saw that Jeremiah had spoken as from the mouth of God, for the accomplishment of the prophecy proved that he had brought forward nothing rashly, but what had been committed to him from above; and yet he did not throw aside his own perverseness. The words themselves shew sufficiently that he was wholly blinded, for he said, *Wherefore dost thou prophesy to us, The Chaldeans will come and take this city?* It was not indeed the design of this foolish and insane king to close the mouth of the Prophet, and, at the same time, to confess that he had a command from God; but thus it is commonly with the wicked, they assail as it were blindly the servants of God, without any judgment or discrimination. Were any one to ask them, whether they mean openly and professedly to resist God as their judge, they would deny it; but yet they cannot bear to be warned and reproved. Here then, as in a mirror, we

see how madly all the wicked resist God, and try as much as they can to extinguish his Spirit. In short, they may, indeed, concede some authority to God, provided they be allowed to live without having anything said against their lusts by his prophets. There is yet no doubt but that the king was especially exasperated by the following words of the Prophet,—

4. And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes;

4. Et Zedechia rex Jehudah not effugiet e manu Chaldeorum, quia tradendo tradam in manum regis Babel, et loquetur os ejus cum ore illius, et oculi ejus oculos ejus videbunt.

When, therefore, the king saw that he would not be exempt from the common judgment, he was especially displeased with Jeremiah; for kings seek to be exempt from all laws, and when they allow the people to be reproved, they yet wish themselves to be deemed sacred. As then Jeremiah classed the king Zedekiah with all the common people, it was a thing not to be endured by a proud king. Hence his indignation was such, that he shut up Jeremiah in prison; and he became implacable, even when God's hand pressed hard on him. It afterwards follows,—

5. And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper?

5. Et Babylonem abducet Zedechiam, et illic erit usque dum visitavero ipsum, dicit Jehova; quando prœliati fueritis adversus Chaldeos, non prospere vobis cedet?

He follows the same subject, *Lead,* he says, *will King Nebuchadnezar Zedekiah captive; and* he will remain in exile until I shall *visit him.* Some understand this time of visiting of his death, for it is certain that he died in Babylon; and as his condition was not improved like that of Jeconiah who was taken from the filth of a prison to the table of the king, this exposition at the first view seems probable, that is, that he was worn down to death by poverty and disgrace. It, however, seems that some alleviation was promised, if indeed a certain kind of death may be deemed a favour; for he was not slain with the sword; and though he was not restored to his own country, there is yet nothing improper

in this way of speaking, that he would be in exile until he was visited, for nothing particular could be hence concluded; and we shall hereafter see that when dead he was buried honourably and with mourning. It is then no wonder that God points out here a time of favour, though Zedekiah was never restored to his own country, and we know that his eyes were plucked out by King Nebuchadnezar, after having been tried and condemned. But this favour of God, however, is not here without reason mentioned, for Nebuchadnezar at length treated him more kindly, at least as far as his burial was concerned: *Lead him*, then he says, *shall Nebuchadnezar into Babylon, and he shall be there until I shall visit him;* that is, he shall remain an exile in a filthy prison, and there he shall pine away and be destitute of all help; he shall be then as one of the lowest, and shall, in short, drag on life ignominiously until the time of my visitation.

He lastly adds, *When ye fight against the Chaldeans, ye shall not succeed.* Here the Prophet meets those foolish notions which still filled the minds of the Jews, so that they did not submit to God nor humble themselves under his mighty hand; for there was yet a large number of men, and the city had strong fortifications. As then they saw that they were furnished with men and forces, they were still confident; and then they became hardened on account of the length of the time they had sustained the siege. When enemies make the first attack, fear fills the minds of all; but when the event disappoints them, then they who before trembled gather courage. So it was with the Jews; for when the city was first encompassed by the Chaldean army, the miserable inhabitants no doubt were greatly terrified; but when they saw their enemies stopped, and effecting nothing by their attacks, they then hardened their hearts more and more. For we must notice what I said yesterday, that they had been besieged probably six or eight months when this vision was given to Jeremiah. Hence it was that their confidence was greater. But the Prophet repels this folly by saying, "Ye fight against the Chaldeans, but the issue will be unsuccessful; for God will

lay you prostrate before your enemies, for with him ye carry on war."

The sum of this introduction is, that Jeremiah was then shut up in prison, and that the king continued in his contumacy, though God's hand pressed hard on him; and then the cause of this is set forth, even because he boldly threatened the king and the city, and declared that God's vengeance was nigh them, so that the king would be led into exile and the city taken and plundered by their enemies. It now follows,—

6. And Jeremiah said, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

7. Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum, thine uncle, shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that *is* in Anathoth; for the right of redemption *is* thine to buy *it*.

8. So Hanameel, mine uncle's son, came to me in the court of the prison, according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance *is* thine, and the redemption *is* thine; buy *it* for thyself. Then I knew that this *was* the word of the Lord.

9. And I bought the field of Hanameel, my uncle's son, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, *even* seventeen shekels of silver.

10. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed *it*, and took witnesses, and weighed *him* the money in the balances.

11. So I took the evidence of the purchase, *both* that which was sealed *according* to the law and custom, and that which was open:

12. And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel, mine uncle's *son*, and in the presence of the witnesses

6. Et dixit Jeremias, Fuit sermo Jehovæ ad me dicendo,

7. Ecce Chanameel filius Sellum patrui tui venit ad te (*aut*, venturus est ad te) qui dicet, Eme tibi agrum meum qui est in Anathoth; quia tibi jus affinitatis (*vertunt*, jus redemptionis, *sed redemptio illa refertur ad affinitatem, vel cognationem*, jus *igitur* cognationis) ad emendum.

8. Et venit ad me Chanameel filius patrui mei, sicut loquutus fuerat Jehova, ad atrium custodiæ, et dixit mihi, Eme agedum agrum meum qui est in Anathoth, quod oppidum est in terra Benjamin, quia tibi jus hæreditatis (*vel*, possessionis; ירשׁ *significat proprie hæreditario jure possidere*,) et tibi redemptio; eme tibi: tunc cognovi quod hic esset sermo Jehovæ.

9. Et emi agrum ab Chanameel filio patrui mei qui erat in Anathoth, et appendi ei pecuniam, septem siclos et decem nummos argenteos.

10. Et scripsi in libro et obsignavi, et contestatus sum testes, et appendi pecuniam in statera (*vel*, in lancibus; *est* in auribus, *sed metaphorice trutinam in duali numero vocant aures.*)

11. Et sumpsi librum emptionis obsignatum ex præscripto et ritu (*vel*, more, *vel*, statuto) et apertum.

12. Et dedi librum emptionis Baruch filio Neriæ filii Maassiæ coram oculis Chanameel patruelis mei, et coram oculis testium qui scripti erant in libro emptionis, co-

that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.

13. And I charged Baruch before them, saying,

14. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, (both which is sealed,) and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days:

15. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Houses, and fields, and vineyards, shall be possessed again in this land.

ram oculis omnium Judæorum qui sedebant in atrio custodiæ;

13. Et præcepi Baruch coram oculis ipsorum, dicendo,

14. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Sume libros istos, librum emptionis hunc et obsignatum et librum apertum (*hoc est*, tam obsignatum quam apertum hunc librum) et pone eos in vase testaceo, ut perstent ad multos dies, (*nunc sequitur applicatio visionis :*)

15. Quia sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Adhuc ement domos et agros et vineas in terra hac.

The whole of this passage ought to be read together, for the Prophet at large explains how and by what symbol this prophecy had been confirmed. Now the purpose of the whole is to shew that after a long time the Jews would return to their own country, for God would restore them, and their captivity would have an end. God's design, then, was to give them a hope of deliverance, but yet they were admonished to wait patiently for the end of their exile.

Let us now come to the external symbol. The Prophet was commanded to buy a field of his uncle's son. Now this appeared strange, for the enemies had taken possession of that part of the country, and none of the Jews could then venture to go out to their own fields. As then they were deprived of the very sight of their own fields, the Prophet must have appeared to have been beside himself when he bought a field in the possession of enemies. But in this way God intended to shew, that after the Jews had for a time been deprived of the possession of the land, they would again return to it, so that every one would recover his own right, and thus everything would become completely their own, that is, after God had shewed them mercy.

But in the first place, let us see whether this was, as they say, a naked vision, or a real transaction. Some think that it was exhibited to Jeremiah by the prophetic Spirit; but it may be easily gathered from the context that the field was actually bought. It is first said, that the *word came to Jeremiah;* but shortly after it is added, that after his uncle's

son came, Jeremiah was informed that the whole business was directed by God. God then foretold the Prophet what was to be, *Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum, thine uncle, shall come to thee,* and shall offer to sell his field to thee. This is what God said to the Prophet; and thus far we may say, that Jeremiah was informed of what was to be either by a dream or a vision; but when he afterwards adds, that Hanameel himself came, and that Jeremiah testifies that he now knew that it was from the Lord, there is no doubt but that it is a real narrative. God then induced Hanameel to come to Jeremiah and to offer him the field on sale, and to ask him to buy it, because he was the next heir, and therefore had the right of redemption. We then perceive that it was a communication from above, but then the reality was connected with it, for Hanameel came and sold the field before witnesses; and all this was necessary, not so much on account of Jeremiah as of the whole people, and especially of the faithful, for whom this prophecy was particularly designed; for God did not intend this to be a common treasure, but laid it up for his chosen people, as we may gather from the conclusion.

Before Hanameel then came, the Prophet was instructed that nothing was done unadvisedly, but that God had arranged and ordered the whole. He was then commanded to buy the field, and as it were to cast away his money; for who would not have said that it was the same thing as to throw it away? And then we are to notice a circumstance as to the time; for the Prophet was then in danger of his life, to what purpose then was the field to him? We have also said that he could not have a free access to it, had he not been shut up in prison; for he could not have ventured to go out of the city. It was then a most strange and ridiculous purchase according to the judgment of the flesh; for Jeremiah squandered away his money, and the possession of the field was only imaginary. But yet as God would have him to buy it, he spared not his money, but purchased the field from his uncle's son.

He then says, that *Hanameel his uncle's son came,* as Jehovah had spoken, that he *came into the court of the*

prison, and that he spoke to him as God had foretold. As to the end of the verse, it may seem strange that the Prophet says, that he now *knew* that the word came from God: for if he before doubted, where would be the certainty as to the prophetic spirit? He had already received a vision; he ought to have embraced what he knew had been foretold to him from above, even without any hesitation: but it appears that he was in suspense and perplexity. It then seems an evidence of unbelief, that he did not put a full and an entire trust in God's testimony, and was not fully persuaded as to the heavenly oracle, until he saw the whole thing really accomplished. But it is right to distinguish between the knowledge received from the revelation of the Spirit and experimental knowledge, as they say. The Prophet therefore did not then for the first time learn that God had spoken, but as he was confirmed in the certainty of his faith, and in the thing itself, there is no inconsistency; for nothing is taken away from the credit and authority of God's word, when the reality and experience confirm us; and thus God often has a regard to the weakness of his people. Jeremiah then relied on God's oracle, and was fully persuaded that he was directed from above to buy the field; but afterwards, when Hanameel came to him, the event was as it were the sealing of the vision: then the truth of God was more and more confirmed in the heart of the Prophet. This, as I have said, was experimental knowledge, which detracts nothing from the credibility of the word, but is rather a help and a comfort to human infirmity. In this sense it was that he said, that he now *knew* it; and thus he intended also to make others to believe the prophecy. For when the faithful compare a vision with its accomplishment, this consent and harmony, so to speak, avails not a little to confirm their faith, that as when in one part they hear that God had spoken, and when in another they see that what the Prophet had been taught was really fulfilled.[1]

[1] *Gataker* and *Venema* give another view of this clause. The Lord, as we find from verse 7, did not tell him to *buy* the field, but only informed him of the coming and offer of Hanameel. When Hanameel came, he knew that it was God's will that he should buy the field, and he instantly

He afterwards adds, that he *bought the field of Hanameel his uncle's son, which was in Anathoth,* in *the land of Benjamin.* There is nothing superfluous in these words, for though the Prophet speaks of places well known, yet he had a regard to the time of the purchase, for the land of Benjamin was then in the power of enemies: the Jews had been reduced to such straits that they were not safe at Jerusalem. Anathoth was a village, as it was well known, exposed to the ravages of enemies, and was seized on as a prey at their first coming. And he adds, *in the land of Benjamin,* for it was nigh the borders of Judah, but it had been forsaken by its inhabitants, and all had fled to Jerusalem. As then the land of Benjamin had no inhabitant, it was by no means reasonable for the Prophet to pay even the smallest sum for a field there.

It may now be asked, how could Hanameel, who was of the Levitical order, sell a field, for we know that fields did not belong to the Levites, and that they had tithes for their inheritance. (Num. xviii. 21.) But this is to be taken for a suburban field, for they had the suburbs, and each had a meadow: they neither ploughed nor reaped, nor was it indeed lawful for them, according to the law, to labour in agriculture, but they fed cattle and sheep: and this is proved by the smallness of the sum given; for what was the field sold for? for seven shekels and ten pieces of silver.[1] We hence see that it was not a large field, but only a meadow like a garden; for the price would have been larger, had it been some acres of land. Then the difficulty here is easily removed, for Hanameel sold to Jeremiah a small meadow, as every Levite had in the suburbs a meadow to feed his sheep or his cattle; at the same time none of them had large herds, but each had a cow or two. This, then, is what we are to understand by the field.

The Prophet adds, that he *wrote a book,* that is, the writing

acted accordingly. He knew from the very circumstances that it was God's message, sent to him to buy the field.—*Ed.*

[1] We may render the words literally thus, "And I weighed for him the money, seven shekels and ten, the money." The word is "silver," but it is often taken for money. The seventeen shekels, according to *Lowth,* were about two pounds of our money.—*Ed.*

of the purchase; for סֵפֶר, *sepher*, means in Hebrew, not only a volume, but what we call a document, and the Latins tablets, (*tabulas.*) Then he says that the writing of the purchase was made, and then it was *sealed*, not as we do by appending a seal to it, but it was closed up, as the custom then was. He also adds, according to *the law and custom;* and at last he says that another writing was made which remained *open;* and it is thought that the open writing means what we call a *copy;* and so the sealed writing was deposited in a chest, and the open copy could be referred to at any time.[1] Though the Prophet alludes to a common custom, yet I doubt not but that he wrote this prophecy on rolls, one sealed and the other open, in order that those who were then living might receive some benefit from his doctrine, and also that the authentic copy, or the original itself, might remain for posterity, as we shall hereafter see. And doubtless God not only intended to strengthen the hope of the faithful after the completed time of exile, as this prophecy would lie dormant for seventy years; but he designed also that it should be then of use, so as to be a support to them in their sufferings. There was also another benefit to be derived from this prophecy, even that the Jews while in exile might begin to entertain hope, and remembering this vision, might feel assured that God would be their Deliverer, according to what he had promised.

This then was the reason why two writings of the purchase were made, the sealed and the open.[2] The open had

[1] There were no doubt two rolls or writings, as it appears clear from ver. 14, where the two are distinctly mentioned, "Take these rolls, this roll of the purchase, even the sealed, and this open roll," &c. The word סֵפֶר ought to be rendered throughout either a roll, or a book, or writing, when preceded by an article, and not "evidence," as in our version.

There seems to be an incongruity in verse the 10th, as rendered by most; the roll is represented as "sealed," before the "witnesses" are mentioned, and before the money was weighed. The rendering, I conceive, ought to be as follows, "So I wrote in a roll; and I sealed it, when I had made witnesses to witness *it*, and weighed the money in balances." The ו may often be rendered "when," and also "so," as it is done in the next verse in our version, though there "and" would be more suitable. The "witnesses" are expressly said in ver. 12 to have subscribed, or written in, the book or roll of purchase, which was sealed.—*Ed.*

[2] The 11th verse, where the two rolls are first mentioned, is difficult to

a present benefit, as it would make the faithful to go more willingly into exile, and calmly to submit to the chastisement allotted to them by God; and for this reason the Prophecy was to be open to all. It was also sealed, in order that after the lapse of seventy years it might animate the godly, and inspire them with the hope of their promised deliverance. This, therefore, is the reason, as I think, why the Prophet relates that he made a writing and sealed it, and then that he made another writing which remained open.

He afterwards adds, that he gave both to his scribe *Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the presence of Hanameel, and in the presence of the witnesses who had subscribed the writings, and in the presence of all who stood there*, that is, in the court of the prison. Hence we may again plainly conclude, that he is narrating a real history, and not a vision exhibited to him: the seller, Hanameel, was present together with witnesses and other Jews; and he says that he gave up the writing with certain orders, for otherwise it would have been merely the delivering up of a book. If he had only deposited it with Baruch, the people would have learnt nothing; but the orders are added, *I charged* Baruch, *saying*, &c. We hence may also conclude, that this oracle was given to the Prophet, not only that it might con-

be rendered. I offer the following literal version of the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th,—

11. And I took the writing of the purchase,—it the sealed, the command-
12. ment and the conditions,—and it the open; and I gave the writing of the purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel my uncle's son, and in the sight of the witnesses who wrote in the roll of the purchase, and in sight of all the Jews who
13. sat in the court of the prison; and I commanded Baruch in their sight,
14. saying, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Take these rolls,—this roll of the purchase, even it the sealed, and this open roll; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.'"

The two rolls are called "the writing of the purchase" in ver. 11, but distinguished, one being "sealed," and the other "open," or unsealed. The sealed contained "the commandment," that is, to purchase, and "the conditions," literally "ordinances;" which *Blayney* renders, "the assignment and the limitations," and the *Vulg.*, "the stipulations and ratifications." But מצוה never means anything but a precept or a commandment, and חקים are things defined, settled, or appointed, and may be rendered "stipulations." Thus the contents of the sealed roll are specified, but those of the open roll are not expressly mentioned.—*Ed.*

tinue for posterity, even after the time of exile was completed, but that it might also be then published and made known to all the Jews. He then says, *Thus saith Jehovah.* He had not yet shewn the design of the prophecy; but when he said that the affair was carried on by the command of God, he rendered them all attentive. *Take,* he says, *these writings, and put them* in an *earthen* or a potter's *vessel.* It seems strange that he did not bid him to put them in another kind of vessel, for that vessel might become decayed, and so the writings might have perished. But we know that even the most precious treasures are deposited in earthen vessels. It is then no wonder that God commanded the prophecy to be put in an earthen vessel. Were any one disposed to understand something more refined, it might be said, that the promise, which apparently was not very firm, was an earthen vessel; for what is more frail than a voice which is dissipated into air? The Jews were driven into exile; they had heard from the mouth of Jeremiah, that the prefixed period was seventy years: but they might, in the meantime have despaired, since only the sound of the voice had reached their ears. However this may be, since the oracle, which was a pledge of deliverance, had been laid up in an earthen vessel, it remained safe and undecayed, because the treasure had been deposited there by God's command.

He says, *That they may continue for many days.* By these words he intimates that the prophecy would not only be profitable to the Jews, who were to be driven soon after into captivity, but also to their posterity, who were not yet born, and that they might know that this prophecy would stand valid after their death, for we ought not to measure the faithfulness of God by the extent of our life. This, then, was the reason why this clause was added: the prophecy was to be preserved in earthen vessels, that it might remain safe and secure for many days, that is, until God delivered his people.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we have at this day the evidence of eternal salvation sealed in earthen vessels, and thou invitest us to the hope of that blessed inheritance by the voice of men,— O

grant, that we may not judge of the permanence of thy faithfulness by the appearance of those whom thou hast made our ministers, but relying on thy perpetuity, may we never doubt but that that life will be kept safe for us, which now every moment seems to vanish away, until at last we shall come to the full fruition of it in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-Seventh.

THOUGH we sufficiently perceive the meaning of the preceding prophecy, it may, however, be proper to touch briefly on the last part, which is the application of the vision, *Houses, and fields, and vineyards shall yet be bought in this land.* God's design then was, that his servant should lay out his money without any regard to his own interest, in order that he might, by this expense, cherish the hope of the faithful to the time of restoration. What is here said was deemed incredible, for no one thought that such a change would happen, as that a permission would be given to the Jews to return to their own country; for the power of the Chaldean monarchy was deemed invincible, and it was necessary for it to be wholly overthrown, in order that God's people might be set free. For this reason then the vision was given, even that the Jews might know that their calamity would not be perpetual, for God had resolved to restore the people and the land. But by the word *field*, all possessions were designated, for he names not only fields, but also *houses* and *vineyards*. It now follows—

16. Now, when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed unto the Lord, saying,

16. Et precatus sum Jehovam postquam dedi librum emptionis Baruch filio Neriæ, dicendo,

17. Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee;

17. Heu Domine Jehova! Ecce tu fecisti cœlos et terram in potentia tua magna et brachio tuo extento; non est ulla res abscondita à te, (*vel*, mirabilis;)

18. Thou shewest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: The Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, *is* his name.

18. Faciens (*vel*, tu facis) clementiam erga mille et rependis iniquitatem patrum in sinum filiorum eorum post ipsos; Deus fortis, potens, Jehova exercituum nomen ejus, (*et quæ sequuntur.*)

Though the Prophet was discharging his own office, yet he confesses that he was himself perplexed at the vision. It hence appears that God's counsel was not always made known in everything to the Prophets, but as far as it was expedient. However, the Prophets were not seized with ecstasies like heathen soothsayers, who pretended they were carried away beyond all their senses. There was not then this fanaticism in the Prophets, so that they spoke like sounding brass, or like the ass of Balaam; but the Lord discovered to them what they taught. They were then disciples, so that they delivered faithfully to the people, as if it were from hand to hand, what was committed to them. But the knowledge with which they were endued was not inconsistent with ignorance as to some things; as when the Prophet said, *Houses, and fields, and vineyards shall yet be bought*, he knew that God promised the restitution of the land and of the people, nor was the vision itself an obscure enigma; but yet the reason was hid from him, and hence the perplexity of which he now speaks; for being astonished at so wonderful a thing, he had recourse to prayer, and confessed that his mind was perplexed. The wonder then of the Prophet proceeded from his ignorance; but that ignorance was not incompatible with prophetic knowledge. For as far as it was necessary, and the office of a teacher required, he no doubt understood the counsel of God; but such was the height or the depth of this mystery, that he was constrained to confess that it was a work of God which surpassed all his thoughts.

We now then perceive how these two things are consistent, —the prophetic knowledge with which Jeremiah was endued, and the ignorance which compelled him to make this exclamation. He knew with certainty what had been shewn to him in the vision, but what was the design and how the work could be done by God, seemed incomprehensible, and hence his astonishment. He therefore says that he prayed: and by this we are taught, that whenever thoughts creep into our minds, which toss us here and there, we ought to flee to prayer. For many increase their anxieties by fomenting them, while they turn themselves to all quarters, and

indulge their own thoughts, and weary themselves without any benefit. Whenever, therefore, any anxiety stealthily lays hold on our minds, let us know that the remedy ought to be in due time applied, that is, to pray to God; so that he may relieve us, and not suffer us to sink into the deep, as it usually happens to all who are curious, and give loose reins to their own imaginations.

We now see that the Prophet was greatly astonished, and yet in such a way as not to look for more than what was profitable; but he immediately prayed, that God would make him to understand what grieved his mind. His prayer follows, which, however, does not immediately discover the mind of the Prophet, for he does not shew the purpose of his prayer until he comes to the 25th verse. But he seems here to refer to many things unconnected with his subject. His design must be ascertained from the conclusion of his prayer, "O Lord," he says, "why hast thou bidden me to buy the field which is now in the hand of enemies? the Chaldeans possess it; and thou hast bidden me to throw away my money." This was substantially his prayer.

But Jeremiah seems to wander and take long circuits when he says, "Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm; nothing is wonderful to thee; thou shewest mercy to thousand generations; thou repayest the iniquity of fathers to their children; thy name is Jehovah of hosts; thou art great in council and excellent in work; thine eyes are open," &c. These things seem not to belong in any degree to the present subject. But the Prophet's object, no doubt, was to restrain himself, as it were, by putting on a bridle, so that he might acquiesce in the counsel of God, though it was hid and incomprehensible to him: for if he had immediately rushed into prayer, he might, at the first burst of his feelings, have contended with God; for such is the disposition and character of man, when he suddenly addresses God, that he boils over beyond all moderation. The Prophet then, who well understood that there is no such moderation in men as to judge rightly and calmly of God's works, set up against himself these fences, and placed, as it were, barriers around him, that he

might not take more liberty than what was right. Let us then know that these high terms in which the Prophet spoke were designed for this end,—that he might produce moderation and humility in himself, so that he might check all those roving thoughts by which men are wont to divert themselves. Let us come now to the words:

Ah, Lord Jehovah! he says; *behold, thou hast made heaven and earth.* Were any one not to attend to the circumstances of the passage, he might think that the Prophet is here rambling, and does not connect his sentences, so that his prayer seems incoherent. But as I have already said, that as the Prophet knew that men take too much liberty when they speak of God's works, he bridled himself in due time, before he came to his subject. He then made this sort of introduction, "O Lord, it does not behove me to contend with thee, nor is it right in me to require thee to give me a reason for thy doings, for thou hast *made heaven and earth by thy great power and extended arm.*" There is here then an implied contrast between God and mortal man; "For who am I to dare to summon thee to a contest! for thy power is justly to be dreaded by us; when we raise up our eyes to heaven, when we look on the earth, there is nothing which ought not to fill us with admiration of thy power, for its immensity appears above and below." We hence see that the Prophet extols in high terms the power of God, in order that he might keep himself in a meek and humble state of mind, and not dare to clamour against God, nor presumptuously rush forward to pronounce a judgment on his works. *Behold,* he says; he sets before his eyes the wonderful workmanship of the world, in which the immeasurable power of God shines forth most conspicuously.

He then adds, *Nor is there any thing hid from thee.* This clause admits of two meanings; for פָּלָא, *pala,* means wonderful, and also hidden. Now the greater part of interpreters give this explanation,—that nothing is hid from God, because all things are before his eyes, for his knowledge penetrates to the deepest depths. It may then be a commendation of God's knowledge, as an eulogy on his power has previously been given; and this meaning is not unsuitable.

I do not, however, reject the other meaning, given by *Jerome*, that there is nothing difficult to God, or wonderful, because all things are subject to his will. Thus the Prophet might say, continuing the same thought, that the power of God, which shines forth to our view in the heavens and in the earth, may at the same time be observed in the permanent government of the world; for he who has created the heavens and the earth can do all things, so that nothing is wonderful to him, that is, nothing is difficult for his power as soon as he has decreed this or that. The main object of the Prophet is, however, still the same.[1]

He now adds, *Thou shewest mercy to thousands, and repayest the iniquity of the fathers to the bosom of their children.* Here the Prophet acknowledges God's judgments to be right, though the reason for them escapes human minds. Both these things were necessary, that is, that Jeremiah should set before himself the awful power of God, and that he should also regard God's judgments as right, though men often think otherwise. For God has hidden reasons for his judgments; and so it happens, that various thoughts disturb us, and every one is disposed to set himself up against God. Hence the Prophet, after having spoken of the immeasurable power of God, now declares also that he is a just judge of the world; and he again restrains himself by another bridle, lest he should pronounce a judgment on God's works according to his own perceptions.

Thou, he says, *shewest mercy to thousands.* This is taken from the Law of Moses, (Ex. xx. 6;) for the Prophets often borrowed their chief sentences from Moses, of whom they were the interpreters. Since God then under the Law declared that he is merciful to thousand generations, though it appears unaccountable to us, yet nothing remains for us to do, but to learn reverently to receive what we cannot compre-

[1] The *Targ.* and the versions, except the *Vulg.*, give the first sense; but the latter is no doubt the true meaning, as the word never means properly to be hidden. The phrase here literally is, "Not harder (or more marvellous) than thou shall anything be," that is, not harder than what thou canst do. Exactly the same phrase occurs in Gen. xviii. 14. The word, in a similar clause, in Deut. xxx. 11, is rendered "hidden;" but the clause literally is, "It is not harder than thou," that is, than what thou canst attain, or do, as the context proves, see verse 14.—*Ed.*

hend. The Prophet then here confesses that the method which God adopts as to his mercy is hid from the human mind. But the latter clause seems, however, less reasonable, —that God should *repay the iniquity of fathers to their children.* Shortly before we saw that this was set forth as an impious blasphemy, (ch. xxxi. 29,) when they said that their fathers had eaten sour grapes, and that their children's teeth were set on edge; for it is always true that the soul that sinneth, it shall die. (Ezek. xviii. 2, 20; Deut. xxiv. 16.) But if God repays the iniquity of fathers to their children, he punishes the innocent, and transfers to children what he ought to have rendered to their fathers. But the Prophet, regarding it a wicked thing to contradict what God had spoken by Moses, adores here this mystery, and thus brings himself to humility and meekness, so that he might not break forth into extremes when speaking of the hidden works of God.

We must at the same time briefly observe, that the innocent are not punished when God includes children with their fathers, and casts the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children, for he does not refer to the innocent and the righteous, but to the wicked. Some, when they saw that this truth militated against the common feelings of mankind, have laid hold of an evasion, that is, that God by a temporal punishment renders to children what their fathers had deserved. But God speaks without exception, that he repays to the bosom of children the reward due to their fathers. But how ought this to be understood? It is a part of this punishment, that God withholds from them his Spirit. When, therefore, his purpose is to punish the vices of fathers in their posterity, he withholds from their posterity the light and grace of his Spirit. It cannot then be but that they will ever accumulate evils on evils, and thus they are entangled in the guilt of their fathers. God then proceeds by degrees in the work of punishing sins; for when it is his purpose to forgive the son the punishment which he together with his father has deserved, he draws him to himself by his Spirit, so that he is freed from punishment; but if his purpose is to execute vengeance on sons and grandsons, he withholds from

them, as I have already said, the gift of the Spirit, so that they do nothing but provoke his wrath more and more, and thus they become involved in the same guilt with their fathers; hence fathers and children receive in common the same punishment.

This indeed seems not at the first view to be just and right; but let us remember that God's judgments are hid from us, and for this reason,—that we may cultivate meekness and humility and learn to be soberly wise, and so confess God to be a just judge as to know that our minds cannot penetrate into this deep abyss. But still the solution given seems plain enough, that is, that God never punishes the innocent. For when he visits the sins of fathers on their children, a part of that punishment is, as I have already stated, that he withholds from the children the light of his Spirit; being blind, they ever run headlong to their own ruin, and thus by the continual commission of new sins they provoke God's vengeance against themselves. When therefore God renders to them the reward due to their fathers, he punishes them at the same time for what they themselves have deserved; nor have they any reason to complain, because they have been guilty in common with their fathers: there is, therefore, nothing strange that they share with them in their punishment. But it, however, depends on the hidden mercy of God, that he favours some with pardon, and thus delivers them from ruin, while he forsakes others; and as they are wicked, they deserve all the punishment he inflicts on them: *Thou*, then, *repayest into the bosom of their sons after them*, that is, after their death.

He afterwards exclaims, *God, strong and mighty! Jehovah of hosts is his name.* He again declares the greatness of God's power, that he might restrain himself, and not rashly undertake any new inquiry, as the case is with curious men, who indulge themselves in speculations, and thus summon God as it were to an account, as though there could be appointed a tribunal before which he might be found guilty. As then the insolence and arrogance of human nature are so great, the Prophet here sets barriers around himself, so that he might keep within the bounds of humility and soberness.

He afterwards changes the person, which is a proof of vehemence and ardour; for it is, as we have seen, a prayer. He does not now address God directly, but says, *Jehovah of hosts is his name*, speaking in the third person.[1] Had he continued in the same strain, he would have said, "Thou art God, strong and mighty," &c., but he says, "Jehovah of hosts is his name." We then see that the Prophet as it were turns aside; and this change of person, as I have stated, proceeded from the vehemence and ardour of his mind. And it often happens to the faithful, that they break off their direct address when they pray, while they contemplate God's works, as displaying, now his power, then his goodness, or his wisdom. The faithful then do not always pray in a continued strain; but as feeling guides them, they now address God, then they turn aside and blend apostrophes. It follows,—

19. Great in counsel, and mighty in work: (for thine eyes *are* open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:)

19. Magnus consilio, excellens opere; cujus oculi (quandoquidem oculi) tui aperti sunt super vias filiorum hominum ad reddendum cuique secundum vias ejus, et secundum fructum operum ejus.

He goes on with the same subject, for he expresses his wonder and admiration as to God's judgments. He first declares that God is *great in counsel and great in work*. By

[1] The change of person seems to begin at the 18th verse, and includes the first clause in the 19th,—

18. He who sheweth mercy to thousands,
And who returns the iniquity of fathers
To the bosom of their children after them,
Is God, the great, the powerful;
Jehovah is his name,—
19. Great in counsel and mighty in his doings:
Who—thine eyes are open
On the ways of the sons of men,
To give to each according to his ways,
And according to the fruit of his doings;
20. Who, &c., &c.

"God, the great," &c., is connected with shewing mercy and requiting iniquity. His greatness is in counsel or wisdom, and his power or might is manifested in his doings. The ם after doings is the Chaldee for ו. Then his omniscience is referred to, as necessary for carrying to effect his purposes and directing his doings. Here he returns to the second person, and the "who" is idiomatic, and the *Welsh* is exactly the same, *Yr hwn y mae dy lygaid*, &c.; and the "Who" is continued in the 20th verse. In saying that each is to have "according to his ways," he intimates what *Calvin* says, that the children like the fathers are guilty.—*Ed.*

counsel, he understands the wisdom of God which not only surpasses all our thoughts, but also absorbs them. And then he mentions the execution of his counsel, which affords evidences of that wisdom which appears to us. By the works of God we learn how great and how unequalled is his wisdom; for that in itself cannot be comprehended, nay men could not have the least knowledge of it, except it were rendered conspicuous by works. The works of God then through their excellency are evidences of his immeasurable wisdom. For this reason and in this sense the Prophet calls God *great in counsel and great in work.*

He adds, that his *eyes are open on all the ways of men.* By these words he intimates that he is the judge of the whole world, and that whatever men may consult, speak, or do, must come to a reckoning. The meaning is, that the providence of God so extends to all parts of the world, that the works of men cannot possibly be hid from him, and that no one can escape his hand; for after having spoken of God's eyes, he adds, *that he may render to every one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.*

The Prophet then does not speak here of any idle speculation such as ungodly men entertain; for they confess that all things are seen by God, but imagine that he is satisfied with having only this bare knowledge: and thus they deprive him of the dignity and office of a judge. But the Prophet here shews what the end of God's providence is, why God has his eyes open, even that he may at last produce at his tribunal all the sayings and doings of men, yea, their thoughts also. We are further taught by these words that our life cannot be rightly formed, unless we bear in mind the presence of God, so as to know that his eyes are on us, and that there is nothing hid from him: for whence is there so much liberty in sinning, except that men grow wanton like fugitives? as when a rebellious son withdraws himself from the eyes of his father, he can then abandon himself wholly to sin, for he is freed from all fear and shame. So our thoughtlessness is like a flight, for we think that we are far removed from God. This then, as I have said, ought always to be remembered, that the eyes of God are open on all our ways,

and for this end,—that he may render to every one according to his ways, and that every one may gather the fruit of his own doings.

Though, then, God for a time may connive at what we do, and may not manifestly shew that he is the judge of men, there is no reason that indifference should creep over us, as though we could escape from his hand; but let us know that all our doings and sayings are now noticed by him, that he may hereafter shew that he is not an idle observer, as some ungodly men dream, but that he is an eye-witness of all things, that he may at last appear as our judge.

This passage is turned by Papists for the support of merits by works; but it is a frivolous attempt; for when Scripture declares that it shall be rendered to every one according to his works, it does not exclude the gratuitous mercy of God; and when God renders a reward to the faithful, it depends on gratuitous pardon, because he forgives them whatever would otherwise vitiate their good works: and to speak more exactly, God does not render to the faithful according to their works, except as he gratuitously pardons them and forgives whatever they have done amiss. Reward then depends on the free mercy of God only. As to the wicked, it is no wonder that a just reward is said to be rendered to them; for we know that they are worthy of eternal perdition, and that God is a righteous judge when he punishes their sins. It follows,—

20. Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, and in Israel, and among *other* men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day.

20. Qui edisti signa et portenta in terra Egypti usque ad diem hunc, et in Israel et in hominibus; et fecisti (*hoc est*, comparasti) tibi nomen secundum diem hunc.

The Prophet here especially commemorates the singular kindness of God, by which he had testified his paternal favour towards his Church. He then says, that *signs* and *wonders* had been done by him in *the land of Egypt*, that is, for the sake of his people. For why were so many miracles done, except to prove the care he had for his chosen people, and thus to confirm his covenant? We hence see that God's favour towards the children of Abraham is here set forth, that is, when he refers to the signs and wonders

which had been done in the land of Egypt. And he adds, *and in Israel.* He extols not only God's power in miracles, but especially the mercy with which he favoured his chosen people. He says also, *to this day.* Not that God performed miracles in every age, but he means that they were worthy of being perpetually remembered, and throughout all ages. Then this refers to the remembrance and celebration of God's power, when the Prophet says, *to this day.* God, indeed, performed miracles at a certain time, but he performed them that they might be remembered in all ages, and that posterity might acknowledge how wonderfully God had dwelt with their fathers.[1]

As then the power which he manifested in Egypt was worthy of being remembered, miracles are said to have been done *to this day;* and they are said to have been done *in Israel,* because it was God's purpose to prove the certainty of his faithfulness when he redeemed his people as he had promised.

He afterwards adds, *and among men.* The Prophet goes on still further. After he had spoken of the redemption of the people, he intimates that wherever he turned himself, he observed and admired the evidences of God's power, as though he had said, "O Lord, thou hast indeed given peculiar testimonies as to thy wonderful power and goodness; the redemption of thy people was a singular work, and ought to be commemorated through all ages; but wherever we turn ourselves, there is no corner in the whole world where some miracles do not appear, which ought to lead us to celebrate thy praises." We hence see that the Prophet proceeds from what is particular to what is general: after having considered God's power and goodness in the redemption of his people, he extended his thoughts to all parts of

[1] This is commonly the meaning given to this verse. It may be rendered as follows,—

20. Who hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt,
To be for signs and wonders to this day
Both to Israel and to mankind;
And hast made to thyself a name,
Such as it is at this day.

They were "signs" or evidences of God's power, and in their character "wonders," that is, supernatural.—*Ed.*

the world, and contemplated God's miracles everywhere. And this is what often occurs in Scripture; after having been reminded of some particular instance of divine power or grace, we are carried away so that we make a transition to what is general. And he adds, *and thou hast made thee*, or acquired to thyself, *a name according to this day;* that is, thou hast made thy name to be perpetual, as its glory still at this day shines forth before our eyes. Then the Prophet means that God had so wonderfully manifested his power, that the knowledge of it would be perpetual, and could never be buried by the ingratitude of men.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as our whole wisdom is this, to submit ourselves to thee, to admire, and receive, and reverently to adore thy judgments,—O grant, that we may not indulge the perverse thoughts of our flesh, but so learn to check and restrain ourselves as ever to render to thee the praise due to thy wisdom, and justice, and power, and thus walk in sobriety of mind while we sojourn in this world, until we shall at length contemplate thy glory face to face, being made partakers of it in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth.

21. And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with great terror;

21. Et eduxisti populum tuum Israel a terra Egypti in signis et portentis, et in manu robusta, et in brachio extento, et in terrore magno;

JEREMIAH comes now nearer to the point in hand; for, after having spoken of the unequalled power of God, he now extols his righteous judgment in inflicting punishment on an ungodly and wicked people. For this end he refers to the favour of redemption, and he then adds that the *land* had been given to Israel which had been promised to their fathers. He afterwards states that this favour had been conferred on the ungrateful, for they immediately shook off the yoke and despised God their redeemer, together with his Law.

He then says, that the people had been *brought up from*

the land of Egypt with signs and wonders. This is an amplification, for God had in an unusual manner made it sufficiently evident that without his favour the people could not have been delivered from Egypt. For had it not been for the manifest display of God's power in miracles and wonders, the Israelites might have appropriated to themselves the favour of God, or to some worldly instrumentality; but God's favour appeared so resplendent in signs and wonders, that the liberation of the people could not have been ascribed either to fortune, or to the efforts of men, or to any other means. And for the same purpose he mentions *the strong hand and the extended arm.* He intimates by these words, that the people had been so delivered, that the hand of God, yea, his extended arm, openly appeared, that is, his power, as we have explained elsewhere, was manifested far and wide.

He refers at last to *great terror:* such was the haughtiness of their enemies, that they would have never suffered the people to depart, had they not been filled with great terror. As then the Egyptians had been by terror subdued, Jeremiah amplifies by this circumstance the favour of redemption, as though he had said, that God's favour was not obscure, because the Israelites might have known by these extraordinary evidences that they were delivered by a divine power. For so great was the power, the valour, and cruelty of their enemies, that no hope of a free departure could have been entertained, had not God put forth his hand from heaven. It afterwards follows,—

22. And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey;

22. Et dedisti illis terram hanc quam juraveras patribus eorum ad dandum ipsis (*hoc est*, te daturum ipsis) terram fluentem lacte et melle;

Here the fruitfulness of the land is commended, so that the ingratitude of the people for their redemption might appear less excusable. God had already bound them, as it were, more than enough to himself, but when the wealth and fruitfulness of the land were added, the bounty of God was doubled, which, by a stronger and more sacred chain, bound the people to obedience. But when they buried, as it were, both their benefits, their impiety was extreme, and so much

baser was their ingratitude. We hence see why the Prophet said that the *land* was given to the people.

He at the same time mentions the reason, even because it had been promised to their fathers. It is not, however, right to suppose that the fathers had any merits, as Jerome says, who ignorantly perverts this passage; for he says, that nothing was due to the people on the ground of merit; but that the fathers were yet worthy on account of their great virtues. But we know that God's covenant was from the beginning gratuitous. The Prophet then means here, that the land was not given as a reward rendered to the people for their works, but that it was given them because it had been gratuitously promised. And he mentions the *oath*, because God, regarding the infirmity of Abraham and the fathers, confirmed by an oath his own promise. But as I have spoken elsewhere more at large on this subject, I touch on it but slightly now. However, whenever there is mention made of an oath, let us know that reproof is indirectly given to the inconstancy of men, who always vacillate, and can never recumb on God's promise, except they are helped by this confirmation.

However this may be, the Prophet here reminds us that God confirmed the pledge which he had given to the fathers when the people entered into the land, because they could not have obtained it by their valour, or by any other means. In short, Jeremiah calls the attention of the people to God's gratuitous covenant, that they might understand that they became possessors of the land by no other right than this,—that God of his own free will had promised to Abraham and his seed that he would give them that land. He speaks, as I have just said, of the fruitfulness of the land, because it was God's design to allure the people in every way, that they might continue in his service. And when the people, thus bountifully dealt with, did not acknowledge God's favour, their extreme and base stupidity was fully proved. What the Prophet then means is, that the land was most fruitful, in which the people had all abundance, and that yet they despised God the giver of so much bounty, according to what immediately follows,—

23. And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law: they have done nothing of all that thou commandest them to do; therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them.

23. Et ingressi sunt, et hæreditate adepti sunt eam; et non audierunt vocem tuam (*ad verbum*, in voce tua) et in lege tua non ambulaverunt (*hoc est*, secundum legem tuam;) quæcunque illis præcepisti ut facerent, non fecerunt; ideo occurrere fecisti illis malum hoc.

The Prophet in this verse confesses that God's vengeance was just, when the people were cast out of the land and driven into exile, because they, after having entered into the land, did not obey the voice of God. The very sight of the land ought to have made the people obedient to God; for they could not have eaten a crumb of bread, without being always reminded whence their food came, even because God had expelled the Gentiles from that land. When, therefore, they were filled with all kinds of good things, and at the same time despised God, no excuse could have been pretended; for if they made ignorance their pretence, the very land itself was before their eyes, which recalled them to the fear of God. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet joins those two things together, that the Israelites *entered into the land*, and that they *disobeyed the voice of God.*

Now, by this clause he intimates that they had not fallen through ignorance, because God had sufficiently made known his will. God had indeed spoken, but it was to the deaf. The Prophet then here shews that there was no other cause for the sin of the people, but that they obstinately refused to attend to the voice of God.

Then he adds for the same purpose, that they had *not walked in his Law.* The Law is often compared to a way; for except God prescribes to us what his will is, and regulates all the actions of our life according to a certain rule, we should be perpetually going astray. God's Law, then, is justly said to be like a way, according to what Moses also speaks, "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Deut. v. 33; see also Is. xxx. 21.) Then Jeremiah, after having shewn that the people had been taught, mentions this,—that the way had been made known to them, so that they went astray knowingly and wilfully; for they could not have turned aside either to the right hand or to the left without being called back by the doctrine of the Law.

He says, in the third place, *What thou hast commanded them to do they did not.* He explains here the same thing more clearly and without any figurative expression, even that they had been unwilling to obey God, while yet they sufficiently understood what was right; for the Law suffered them not to go astray, and God had included in it everything necessary to be known. The Prophet then shews that they had not turned aside except through perverseness, because they knew what God required. As a certain Lacedæmonian said, that the Athenians knew what was right, but were unwilling to do it; so the Prophet in this place distinguishes the open impiety and contempt of the people from ignorance and inadvertence, and does not mean that the people did not satisfy *all* the precepts of the Law.

And this passage also *Jerome* explains very absurdly; for he says that the Israelites did not stand to their promises, because they had said that they would do whatever God commanded. But the Prophet here does not condemn them as to one thing only, as though he had said that there had been some defect, but he says that they had been wholly disobedient, for they had not despised only one precept of the Law, but had as it were designedly cast aside the whole Law, and obeyed none of God's commandments. Then this negative sets forth the defection of the people as to the whole law, and as to every precept of it.

And this passage is worthy of special notice, because the Prophet advisedly repeats the same thing,—that the people *had not walked in the Law,*—that they *had not obeyed the voice of God,*—that they *had done nothing of what had been commanded;*[1] for a heavier condemnation and vengeance await those who have been faithfully taught what pleases God and what is right, and yet follow their own will, and are carried away by the passions and lusts of the flesh. In a word, Jeremiah points out the highest pitch of impiety,

[1] There is this difference between these three things: the "voice" was that of God by his prophets,—the "law" was the ten commandments,—and "all which" had been "commanded" were the statutes and ordinances, the civil and ceremonial appointments. To "hearken to his voice," rather than to obey it, is what is meant: so far from obeying it, they would not hear the Prophets. This had been throughout their sin.—*Ed.*

that is, when people clearly and familiarly know what the will of God is, and yet disregard it and shake off the yoke, and thus shew manifestly a contempt for the whole Law.

It follows, *Therefore thou hast made to come on them all this evil.* The Prophet here testifies that whatever had happened to the people, was not by chance, but that a reward was rendered to their sins. Men in some measure acknowledge God's judgments, but this acknowledgment presently vanishes. Wisely then does the Prophet here shew that God's vengeance is evident in adversities, and that the people thus received the reward which they had deserved. It now follows,—

24. Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest *it*.

25. And thou hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee the field for money, and take witnesses; for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

24. Ecce aggeres (*vel*, catapultæ, *vel*, arietes) venerunt ad urbem ad capiendum eam; et urbs tradita est in manum Chaldæorum oppugnantium eam, propter gladium, famem et pestem; et quod tu loquutus es (quicquid loquutus es) evenit; et ecce tu vides.

25. Et tu dixisti mihi, Domine Jehova, eme tibi agrum pecunia et testare testes; cum tamen urbs tradita sit in manum Chaldæorum.

Here then at length the Prophet discovers his own perplexity. We have already stated the reason why he made so long an introduction before he came to the main thing: it was necessary for him to put on as it were a bridle; for except we restrain our thoughts, we shall become petulant against God, and there will be no moderation. The Prophet then, that he might not peevishly expostulate with God, set before himself his immeasurable power, and then he added that nothing happens except through his righteous vengeance. He now however asks, how it was, that he was bidden to buy the field when the city and the whole country were delivered up into their enemies. He then mentions here this inconsistency, and confesses that his mind was embarrassed, for he could not discover why God had bidden him to buy the field, and yet had determined to drive the people into exile and to scatter them into remote lands. But we have said that the Prophet was fully persuaded of

God's truth; and hence it was that he was so willing and ready to obey; for he made no delay in buying the field; and he afterwards laid up with Baruch the writings of the purchase. But after having performed all this, he brought a complaint against God; and as the thing appeared unreasonable, he desired this knot to be untied.

He then says, *Behold the mounts*, or, the warlike engines, for the word may mean either. The word סללות, *sallut*, often means mounts; but as mention is made here of a siege, the Prophet seems to refer, as we have said in the sixth chapter, to warlike engines or battering rams. And there were engines to beat down walls; great stones or a number of stones were also cast. I am therefore inclined to the opinion of those who consider that they were either engines to shoot stones and darts, or battering rams. *Behold*, then, he says, there are moved to the city *battering rams to take it, and the city is delivered up to the Chaldeans.* It was, it seems, the tenth year of Zedekiah, and at the beginning of the eleventh month the city was taken. But the Prophet is the best interpreter of his own words, and what he means may be easily gathered from the context, for he says that the city was taken by *the sword, by famine, and by pestilence;* as though he had said, that though the enemies had not as yet entered into the city, yet it was all over with it, that there was no hope remaining, because it was not only assailed by arms and a powerful force, but it had also enemies within, which pressed hard on it, even *famine* and the *pestilence.* As then a great number had already been consumed by pestilence and famine, the Prophet says, that though the enemies should cease to assail it, and make no forcible entrance into it, yet it was all over with it, because the pestilence and famine had so prevailed, that there was no hope of deliverance. By these words he intimates an extremity of despair; and hence also arose the thought which tormented the mind of the Prophet, that it appeared wholly unreasonable that God should bid him to buy the field when the city had been already delivered up into the power of enemies.

He adds, *and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest it.* He confirms what he had just said, even

that the destruction of the city did not otherwise happen than through God's judgment. And he confirms it, because whatever then happened, had already been testified during the time of the Prophet himself. And it hence appeared, that the city was not distressed through chance, because God had foretold nothing by his servants but what he had decreed and resolved to do. Then the ruin of Jerusalem was the work of God, of which he had foretold by his servants. For these two things ought to be joined together—the mouth of God and the hand of God. Nor is it lawful to imagine such a thing as some fanatics do, that God sees from heaven whatever is done on earth, and yet continues in an idle state. But he decrees what is right, and then when it is necessary, he testifies it by his servants the Prophets. However, the mouth of God ought not to be separated from his hand. The Prophet then shews that the destruction of the city was the righteous judgment of God, because the Prophets had previously spoken of it.

The words, *thou seest it*, refer to the preceding sentence, or to that which immediately follows, even because it seemed inconsistent or unreasonable that the Prophet should buy the field as God commanded, and yet that God knew that the land was possessed by enemies, and that the people were to be driven into exile. Since then God had resolved to cast out the people from the land, how was it that he had bidden his servant to buy the field? Had all this been unknown to God, the inconsistency would not have been so evident. But when God perfectly knew that what he had so often proclaimed as to the exile by his Prophets could not be changed, what could be his purpose in bidding the field to be bought and the purchase to be confirmed by witnesses, when yet the city was delivered up to enemies? Jeremiah, after having mentioned the substance of his prayer, now adds the answer he received from God, in which is seen the fruit of his prayer, even that he had been taught what had regard to the deliverance and return of the people, in order that the faithful might entertain hope, and also that they, relying on the promise, might cheerfully bear their exile until the prefixed time came. The words are these,—

26. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying,
27. Behold, I *am* the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

26. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiah, dicendo,
27. Ecce ego Jehova Deus universæ carnis, An a me abscondita erit ulla res (*vel*, An mihi difficilis erit ulla res)?

We have already said that the verb פָּלָא, *pela*, admits of two meanings; it means to be hid and to be wonderful, and hence by a metaphor it means what is difficult and impossible. Many take it to mean here, that nothing escapes the observation of God. But as I have said in the last lecture, I am more inclined to refer it to God's power, even that all things are in the hand and at the pleasure of God, so that there is no difficulty in his way. For whence comes to men so much anxiety, except that they are stopped by obstacles? but God can surmount all obstacles without any labour. That our minds then may not be perplexed, rightly is set before us the power of God.

And this meaning is most suitable to this passage: for Jeremiah, when that which seemed inconsistent occurred to him, was constrained to cast his anxiety as it were into the bosom of God. Then God, in order to relieve him, says that nothing is difficult to him, because he is the God of all flesh. Though by the words *all flesh*, the Scripture often means all kinds of animals, yet oftener the human race only. I do not, however, refinedly explain this passage, as though God did set the Gentiles in opposition to the Jews, and thus denied that he would be any longer the God of Abraham's children, because he had repudiated them on account of their sins; but he says that he is in an especial manner the king of the whole earth, and rules over the whole human race. As God then, he says, is *the God of all flesh, can anything be impossible to him?*

28. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it:
29. And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and

28. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego trado urbem hanc in manum Chaldæorum et in manum Nebuchadnezer regis Babylonis, et capiet eam;
29. Et ingredientur Chaldæi, qui oppugnant urbem hanc, et succendent urbem hanc igne, et exurent eam, et domus in quibus suffitum fecerunt super tecta ipsarum Baal,

poured out drink-offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger.

et libamen libarunt diis alienis ad me provocandum.

The import of the answer is, that though God would bring to an end the seventy years of exile, yet there was no reason for hypocrites to gather encouragement, for this promise did not belong to them. God then speaks here, in the first place, of his vengeance, in order to fill the despisers of his Law with dread, and to intimate that they were excluded from the favour of redemption. He afterwards adds, that he would at length be merciful to the exiles; but this favour is confined to the elect and faithful alone.

The two parts of the answer ought then to be noticed, for God seems here to set in opposition one to another two contrary things. But as I have said, in the former clause, he has in view the hypocrites, who applied to themselves, without faith and repentance, what the Prophet had testified of restoration. God then sets forth here his extreme severity, and then he mitigates that rigour; but he then turns his discourse to the elect, because they alone were capable of receiving his favour.

Let us now come to the words, *I will deliver this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of King Nebuchadnezar, and he will take it.* His purpose was, that what Jeremiah himself had predicted by his command, should remain unalterable, that the city could not be delivered. For it might have disturbed the mind of the Prophet were the Jews shortly after to be delivered, and were the siege of the city to be raised: he might, in that case, have been exposed to ridicule, together with his prophecies, and rashness might have been objected to him, because he had dared to announce in God's name what we before noticed. For this reason and purpose God declares that nothing could be changed, for the Chaldeans were to take the city; and thus he bids the Prophet to retain a quiet mind, and not to disturb himself, as though it was his intention to expose his prophecies to ridicule; for God's sacred name would thus have been subjected to many reproaches. Had Jeremiah been proved guilty of falsehood, what would have been the consequence, but that the Jews

would have insolently triumphed over God? God then declares again that the city was given over to destruction.

And therefore he adds, *enter in shall the Chaldeans who assail the city;* for he does not say that they would come, but he confirms in other words what he had said; *Break* then *into the* city shall the Chaldeans, though it was closed up and fortified; *and shall set on fire this city.* It was not without purpose that he mentioned the word city so often; for as it was the sanctuary of God, and the royal seat, the Jews thought that it was impregnable, and that the sun could be sooner cast down from heaven than that enemies could take possession of it: in order then to subvert this false confidence, God often mentioned the word city. He at last adds, that the Chaldeans would *burn* it, as though he had said, that whatever Jeremiah had predicted would certainly be fulfilled, not only respecting the attack on the city, but also its destruction, so that not a stone would be left on a stone, but that there would be a dreadful desolation until the time of its restoration. The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou shewest that thou so rulest over the whole world as to exercise a peculiar care over us whom thou hast been pleased to gather into the bosom of thy Church,—O grant, that we may be so restrained by thy awful power within the bounds of our duty, as that we may yet be always fully persuaded that thou art our God and Father, and thus submit ourselves willingly to thy word, and not only taste of thy goodness, which is laid up for thy children, but also feed on it, so that we may at length come into thy blessed kingdom above, where there will be full satisfaction and fruition, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth.

I DID not, in the last lecture, fully explain the passage in which the Prophet announced the burning of the city. After having spoken of the city, he mentions the *houses* on which they had *offered incense* to their idols, and *poured out libations.* He then expresses the cause why so heavy a vengeance from God awaited that holy city, even because its

houses had been polluted by superstitions. And he says, that incense had been made to idols on their tops or roofs; for the roofs, as it appears from many parts of Scripture, were places, as it were, to walk in; and we know that idolaters ever sought high places, as they imagined that they were thus nearer to God. Then the design is to shew, that the punishment of which the Prophet had spoken, was not too severe, because all the houses had been contaminated by many sacrilegious acts.

He first mentions *Baal*, and then *foreign gods*. Baal, we know, is sometimes taken specifically, and sometimes includes all sorts of idols, and yet the Prophets often used the plural number, and called them Baalim, that is, patrons; whom the Jews thought that they were first to propitiate, in order that they might in the same manner pacify God. For superstition is never satisfied with the one only true God, but seeks many gods, as we shall hereafter see in the 35th verse, where Molech is mentioned, being added to Baal. And the Prophet says here, that they had poured *libations to foreign gods*. We hence see that Baal includes idols of every sort.

He adds, *that they might provoke me*. By these words God intimates, that no ignorance could have been pretended by the Jews, for they had been more than sufficiently taught from the Law how God was to be worshipped; and a rule had been also prescribed to them to worship God alone: but they worshipped many gods, and according to their own fictitious superstitions. Justly, then, does God here complain that they had, as it were, purposely provoked him, for ignorance could not have been made a pretext, since the doctrine of the Law was sufficient to guide them. It now follows—

30. For the children of Israel, and the children of Judah, have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord.

30. Quia fuerunt filii Israel et filii Jehudah tantummodo patrantes malum in oculis meis à pueritia sua; quia Israel tantummodo fuerunt provocantes me in opere manum suarum, dicit Jehova.

He amplifies the sin of the people, that they never departed from their vices. And he mentions the ten tribes, and also the tribe of Judah. The ten tribes, we know, had departed from the pure worship of God, when as yet true

religion continued at Jerusalem. By mentioning then the *children of Judah*, he no doubt aggravated their guilt, intimating that they had fallen together with the Israelites, while yet they had for a time been preserved. The Israelites had become degenerated, afterwards the whole seed of Abraham became implicated in the same defection, so that they forsook the true worship of God. But afterwards he mentions only the children of Israel, but he includes also the tribe of Judah. For it ought to be observed, that when Scripture connects Israel with Judah, Israel then means the ten tribes, and that for the sake of honour or reproach the house of Judah is referred to separately from the kingdom of Israel; but that when Israel is alone mentioned, it includes generally all the children of Abraham without exception. So it is in this place, when he says that the children of Israel and the children of Judah had done nothing but provoked God. Afterwards he mentions only Israel, and includes the twelve tribes.

But he says that the children of Israel and of Judah had *only provoked him from their youth.* The particle אַךְ, *ak*, is sometimes taken as an affirmative, and sometimes as an adversative, but, or nevertheless; and this latter sense would be suitable, were the context to allow it. I am inclined to agree with those who render it "only;" and the Prophet seems to have removed all ambiguity, for he not only says, that they had done, but that they *had been doing evil*, which is a mode of speaking that intimates a continued action; they *had* then *been doing evil*, that is, they never ceased. And he confirms this declaration by saying אַךְ, *ak*, *only*, that is, their purpose had been nothing else, or all their study has been no other than to provoke me without end and measure.[1] We hence see that every ground of complaint is taken away from the Jews, because God, by long forbearance, had deferred his vengeance, for he might have punished them many ages before. As then they had never ceased to pro-

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voke God, the rigour shewn to them could not have appeared too much, for he had, in his goodness, invited them to repentance, but with no effect.

And *from their youth* here is not to be understood of individuals, but is to be extended to the whole people; and so *youth* is to be taken for the time of their redemption, as we shall hereafter see. For the Church was in a manner then born, and in the desert, when they had been recently brought to the light, for God had delivered them from the darkness of death. In their very childhood they began to provoke God; from that time they had always been perverse in their wickedness.

The meaning then is, that the people of Israel had been of such a perverse disposition that it became necessary at length to punish them severely, for they ceased not to add evils to evils. And the particle אך, *ak*, shews their aggravated guilt, because they applied their whole minds to provoke God, and had been ingenious in devising superstitions, by which they polluted the worship of God: *They have* then, he says, *been only doing evil.*

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31. Quia ad iram meam et excandescentiam meam fuit mihi urbs ista ex quo die ædificarunt eam ad diem hunc usque, ad tollendum ipsam è conspectu meo;

He confirms what we have just said, even that God, however severely he might punish the Jews, would not yet exceed due limits in his judgment, because their iniquity had reached the highest pitch. It was a dreadful judgment when the city was wholly demolished by fire, and the Temple destroyed. Hence the atrocity of the punishment might have driven many to complain that God was too severe. Here he checks all such complaints, and says, that the *city* had been *built* as it were for this end, even to provoke him, as we say in French, *Elle a esté faite pour me depiter, pour me facher*. Some read, "Reduced to me has been the city;" but they pervert and obscure the meaning. It might more properly be rendered, "The city has been destined to me for my wrath and indignation." But the meaning which I have given is simpler. Thus the words אַפִּי, *aphi*, and חֲמָתִי, *chemeti*, are to be taken passively, even that the city Jerusalem had been in a manner devoted to this madness, so that it ceased not to inflame more and more against itself the vengeance of God. In a word, he repeats in other words what he had before said, even that the children of Israel did nothing else than provoke God by their misdeeds.

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The connection in this way appears more obvious *Ed.*

There is then nothing new said here, but as it was a thing difficult to be believed, the Prophet dwells on it, and says, that the city Jerusalem *had been for the wrath and indignation of God, from the time in which it had been founded.* And we may gather from the end of the verse that this is the true meaning, for he says, *Even to this day, that I should remove it from my sight;* as though he had said, that the Jews had made no end of sinning, so that it was now quite the time to punish a people so wicked, whose impiety was unhealable. And he points out their persistency when he says, *even to this day.*[1] For the people had not only begun to sin in the wilderness, but they pursued in a regular course, so to speak, their impiety, so that at no age, in no year, in no day, did they cease from their vices. Here then is pointed out their constant habit of sinning. It follows—

32. Because of all the evil of the children of Israel, and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

32. Super omne malum (*vel*, propter omne malum) filiorum Israel et filiorum Jehudah, quod patrarunt ad provocandum me, ipsi, reges eorum, proceres eorum, sacerdotes eorum et prophetæ eorum, et viri Jehudah et incolæ Jerusalem.

This verse is connected with the last: God had complained, that the city had been so perverse in its character, that it seemed to have been founded and built for the purpose of seeking its own ruin by its sins. He confirms that declaration by adding, *On account of all the wickedness of the children of Israel, and of the children of Judah.* By *all the wickedness* or evil, he means what he before said, that they had been doing only evil, for they had offended not only in one thing, but had abandoned themselves to impiety, so that

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31. For the occasion of my wrath, and the occasion of my indignation, has this city been to me from the day that they have built it even
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So the latter part of verse 31st ought to be connected with the following verse. The verb for "remove" is in the infinitive mood preceded by ל. It is an elliptical phrase, as is sometimes the case, where a resolution, obligation, or duty is intended.—*Ed.*

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26. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying,
27. Behold, I *am* the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

26. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiah, dicendo,
27. Ecce ego Jehova Deus universæ carnis, An a me abscondita erit ulla res (*vel*, An mihi difficilis erit ulla res)?

We have already said that the verb פָּלָא, *pela*, admits of two meanings; it means to be hid and to be wonderful, and hence by a metaphor it means what is difficult and impossible. Many take it to mean here, that nothing escapes the observation of God. But as I have said in the last lecture, I am more inclined to refer it to God's power, even that all things are in the hand and at the pleasure of God, so that there is no difficulty in his way. For whence comes to men so much anxiety, except that they are stopped by obstacles? but God can surmount all obstacles without any labour. That our minds then may not be perplexed, rightly is set before us the power of God.

And this meaning is most suitable to this passage: for Jeremiah, when that which seemed inconsistent occurred to him, was constrained to cast his anxiety as it were into the bosom of God. Then God, in order to relieve him, says that nothing is difficult to him, because he is the God of all flesh. Though by the words *all flesh*, the Scripture often means all kinds of animals, yet oftener the human race only. I do not, however, refinedly explain this passage, as though God did set the Gentiles in opposition to the Jews, and thus denied that he would be any longer the God of Abraham's children, because he had repudiated them on account of their sins; but he says that he is in an especial manner the king of the whole earth, and rules over the whole human race. As God then, he says, is *the God of all flesh, can anything be impossible to him?*

28. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it:
29. And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and

28. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego trado urbem hanc in manum Chaldæorum et in manum Nebuchadnezer regis Babylonis, et capiet eam;
29. Et ingredientur Chaldæi, qui oppugnant urbem hanc, et succendent urbem hanc igne, et exurent eam, et domus in quibus suffitum fecerunt super tecta ipsarum Baal,

poured out drink-offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger.

et libamen libarunt diis alienis ad me provocandum.

The import of the answer is, that though God would bring to an end the seventy years of exile, yet there was no reason for hypocrites to gather encouragement, for this promise did not belong to them. God then speaks here, in the first place, of his vengeance, in order to fill the despisers of his Law with dread, and to intimate that they were excluded from the favour of redemption. He afterwards adds, that he would at length be merciful to the exiles; but this favour is confined to the elect and faithful alone.

The two parts of the answer ought then to be noticed, for God seems here to set in opposition one to another two contrary things. But as I have said, in the former clause, he has in view the hypocrites, who applied to themselves, without faith and repentance, what the Prophet had testified of restoration. God then sets forth here his extreme severity, and then he mitigates that rigour; but he then turns his discourse to the elect, because they alone were capable of receiving his favour.

Let us now come to the words, *I will deliver this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of King Nebuchadnezar, and he will take it.* His purpose was, that what Jeremiah himself had predicted by his command, should remain unalterable, that the city could not be delivered. For it might have disturbed the mind of the Prophet were the Jews shortly after to be delivered, and were the siege of the city to be raised: he might, in that case, have been exposed to ridicule, together with his prophecies, and rashness might have been objected to him, because he had dared to announce in God's name what we before noticed. For this reason and purpose God declares that nothing could be changed, for the Chaldeans were to take the city; and thus he bids the Prophet to retain a quiet mind, and not to disturb himself, as though it was his intention to expose his prophecies to ridicule; for God's sacred name would thus have been subjected to many reproaches. Had Jeremiah been proved guilty of falsehood, what would have been the consequence, but that the Jews

would have insolently triumphed over God? God then declares again that the city was given over to destruction.

And therefore he adds, *enter in shall the Chaldeans who assail the city;* for he does not say that they would come, but he confirms in other words what he had said; *Break* then *into the* city shall the Chaldeans, though it was closed up and fortified; *and shall set on fire this city.* It was not without purpose that he mentioned the word city so often; for as it was the sanctuary of God, and the royal seat, the Jews thought that it was impregnable, and that the sun could be sooner cast down from heaven than that enemies could take possession of it: in order then to subvert this false confidence, God often mentioned the word city. He at last adds, that the Chaldeans would *burn* it, as though he had said, that whatever Jeremiah had predicted would certainly be fulfilled, not only respecting the attack on the city, but also its destruction, so that not a stone would be left on a stone, but that there would be a dreadful desolation until the time of its restoration. The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou shewest that thou so rulest over the whole world as to exercise a peculiar care over us whom thou hast been pleased to gather into the bosom of thy Church,—O grant, that we may be so restrained by thy awful power within the bounds of our duty, as that we may yet be always fully persuaded that thou art our God and Father, and thus submit ourselves willingly to thy word, and not only taste of thy goodness, which is laid up for thy children, but also feed on it, so that we may at length come into thy blessed kingdom above, where there will be full satisfaction and fruition, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—Amen.

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31. For this city hath been to me *as* a provocation of mine anger and of my fury, from the day that they built it even unto this day, that I should remove it from before my face;

31. Quia ad iram meam et excandescentiam meam fuit mihi urbs ista ex quo die ædificarunt eam ad diem hunc usque, ad tollendum ipsam è conspectu meo;

He confirms what we have just said, even that God, however severely he might punish the Jews, would not yet exceed due limits in his judgment, because their iniquity had reached the highest pitch. It was a dreadful judgment when the city was wholly demolished by fire, and the Temple destroyed. Hence the atrocity of the punishment might have driven many to complain that God was too severe. Here he checks all such complaints, and says, that the *city* had been *built* as it were for this end, even to provoke him, as we say in French, *Elle a esté faite pour me depiter, pour me facher.* Some read, "Reduced to me has been the city;" but they pervert and obscure the meaning. It might more properly be rendered, "The city has been destined to me for my wrath and indignation." But the meaning which I have given is simpler. Thus the words אַפִּי, *aphi*, and חֲמָתִי, *chemeti*, are to be taken passively, even that the city Jerusalem had been in a manner devoted to this madness, so that it ceased not to inflame more and more against itself the vengeance of God. In a word, he repeats in other words what he had before said, even that the children of Israel did nothing else than provoke God by their misdeeds.

children of Israel have doubtless been provoking me with the work of their hands, saith Jehovah.

The connection in this way appears more obvious.—*Ed.*

There is then nothing new said here, but as it was a thing difficult to be believed, the Prophet dwells on it, and says, that the city Jerusalem *had been for the wrath and indignation of God, from the time in which it had been founded.* And we may gather from the end of the verse that this is the true meaning, for he says, *Even to this day, that I should remove it from my sight;* as though he had said, that the Jews had made no end of sinning, so that it was now quite the time to punish a people so wicked, whose impiety was unhealable. And he points out their persistency when he says, *even to this day.*[1] For the people had not only begun to sin in the wilderness, but they pursued in a regular course, so to speak, their impiety, so that at no age, in no year, in no day, did they cease from their vices. Here then is pointed out their constant habit of sinning. It follows—

32. Because of all the evil of the children of Israel, and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

32. Super omne malum (*vel*, propter omne malum) filiorum Israel et filiorum Jehudah, quod patrarunt ad provocandum me, ipsi, reges eorum, proceres eorum, sacerdotes eorum et prophetæ eorum, et viri Jehudah et incolæ Jerusalem.

This verse is connected with the last: God had complained, that the city had been so perverse in its character, that it seemed to have been founded and built for the purpose of seeking its own ruin by its sins. He confirms that declaration by adding, *On account of all the wickedness of the children of Israel, and of the children of Judah.* By *all the wickedness* or evil, he means what he before said, that they had been doing only evil, for they had offended not only in one thing, but had abandoned themselves to impiety, so that

[1] It has been found difficult to render this verse literally, though the general meaning is evident, and is given in our version, which is more paraphrastic than usual. If we take על for עלה, in its Chaldee sense, as in Dan. vi. 5, 6, we shall find the version easy,—

31. For the occasion of my wrath, and the occasion of my indignation, has this city been to me from the day that they have built it even
32. to this day; so that I shall remove it from my sight on account of all the wickedness of the children of Israel, &c. &c.

So the latter part of verse 31st ought to be connected with the following verse. The verb for "remove" is in the infinitive mood preceded by ל. It is an elliptical phrase, as is sometimes the case, where a resolution, obligation, or duty is intended.—*Ed.*

there was nothing pure or honest among them; for they had given themselves up to impiety, so that they omitted nothing that was calculated to provoke God. A universal blot is extended to every part of life, as though he had said, that they were imbued with so much wickedness, that no sound part remained in them. It is possible for man's body to labour under one or two diseases, while there may be soundness in some of the members; but the Prophet means here, that the Israelites had become so corrupt, as it is said in Psalm xiv. 1, that nothing remained whole among them.

Now God condemns here all ranks of men: in the first place he says, that the *kings* had sinned; for they not only themselves had forsaken the true worship of God, but had become the cause of defection or apostasy to others. To kings he adds *princes*, or counsellors, and then *priests* and *prophets*. And, doubtless, the kings with their counsellors ought to have been one eye, the priests and the prophets the other; for the two eyes in a true and legitimate government are the judges and the pastors of the Church. But the Prophet says, that the kings and their counsellors had been ungodly, and then that the priests and the prophets had been implicated in similar crimes. And it was indeed something monstrous to see such blindness and madness in those priests whom God had, by a hereditary right, set over the Church as the interpreters of the Law, according to what is said, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." (Mal. ii. 7.) And when the priests failed in their office, either through ignorance or sloth, God raised up prophets in their place, and his purpose was to prevent by such a help the ruin of his Church. But Jeremiah says, that the prophets had become like the priests.

This passage deserves to be carefully noticed; for we see how delighted many are when the Church is disturbed by discords; for they think that they are thus excused, when they cast aside every care and every concern for religion; and many indulge in this kind of indifference. But if the faithful had been so careless at that time, must not religion have a thousand times vanished away, having been

wholly extinguished and obliterated from their hearts? Let us then learn, that though false prophets may rise and obscure pure doctrine by their fallacies, and though the sacrificers should become apostates, and raise up, as it were, a banner to demolish the whole Church—yet let us learn to be firm; for our faith ought not to be shaken, though the whole world were in confusion, nay, though Satan mingled heaven and earth together. In short, it is the real trial of our faith, when we firmly abide in God's truth at the time when Satan attempts above all things to throw everything into confusion. For Jeremiah does not speak here of the Egyptians or the Assyrians, but of the chosen people, the children of Abraham, the sacred heritage of God; and yet he says that the priests and prophets had become leaders to the people in their sinful courses, so that they cast aside the true worship of God, perverted the Law, and in short, departed from religion.

He afterwards adds, *and the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* He speaks not of the Israelites, who had long ago become polluted, and had abandoned themselves to ungodly superstitions, for they had become, as it were, aliens to the people of God; but he names only the Jews, who remained alive, that God's Church might continue in the world. He proceeds by degrees, for he mentions the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the last place. It was indeed less to be endured that those, who had the Temple before them, who were constantly reminded of God's true worship, should be apostates, than if they dwelt in villages; for those who lived in the country, and were wont to come to the Temple three times a-year, had apparently some excuse. But as the citizens of Jerusalem enjoyed so many religious means, as the Law of God continually sounded in their ears, as the sacrifices were as trumpets by whose blast they were summoned to serve and fear God, it was, as we have said, a great aggravation to their guilt. Hence the Prophet, for the sake of a greater reproach, joins them to the *men of Judah.* It follows—

33. And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching *them*, yet they

33. Et verterunt mihi cervicem et non faciem; et docendo eos, et manè surgendo et docendo, et non audierunt (et ipsi non audientes, *ad verbum*,

[illegible] ut reciperent [illegible] disciplinam.)

[illegible] the perverseness [illegible] that they had deliber- [illegible] had shewn no regard for [illegible] does this knowingly [illegible] without contempt. When any [illegible] and I look another way, is it not a manifest [illegible] disdain? and he who speaks, does he [illegible] disregarded? Thus God then complains [illegible] not fallen away through ignorance, but as [illegible] premeditated obstinacy: *they* then *turned* [illegible] neck,[1] when yet they ought to have been [illegible] the doctrine of the Law. For God shews [illegible] he is pleased to prescribe what ought [illegible] the way of salvation. When he looks [illegible] must be our pride, if we look not also [illegible] This, then, is the first thing, that the [illegible] and wilfully despised God and his Law. [illegible] guilt by saying, *And I taught them,* [illegible] *taught them, and they hearkened not.*[2] [illegible] only once promulgated, the Jews might [illegible] that they were for the most part [illegible] of pretence remained for them, since [illegible] continually interpreting the Law, as God [illegible] "A Prophet will I raise up for [illegible] of thy brethren." (Deut. xviii. 18.) [illegible] this benefit would be perpetual in [illegible] would never be wanting Prophets [illegible] to the people. For he sets Prophets [illegible] divinors, foretellers, and all [illegible] as though he had said, that there

[illegible] the back. The same words are found [illegible] are participles, dependent on [illegible] by making a little change in the order [illegible] evident,—

[illegible] and not the face to me, while teaching [illegible] yet they hearkened not to receive [illegible] teaching them!—*Ed.*

was no reason for the people to seek the fallacies of Satan, since the Prophets were sufficient. Lest the Jews then should complain that they were hardly dealt with, God here shews that he had taught them, for he ascribes to himself what he had done by his Prophets: and doubtless Prophets and teachers are nothing else but the instruments of the Holy Spirit; for no one is fit to teach, but when he is guided by the Spirit of God. Justly then does God claim for himself these offices, so that all the praise for the building up of his Church is due to him, though he employs the labours of men. In this sense it is, that he says, that he had *taught* them.

Then he adds, that he *rose up early*, that is, that he had been sedulous. As a master of a family, who is solicitous for his own, early inquires how they are, and looks around the whole house; so also God represents himself here, speaking of his care in teaching the Israelites, as though he had said, that not only his Law was set before their eyes, by which they might learn what was right, but that Prophets were also given who ceased not to admonish and exhort them.

Now this manner of speaking ought to be particularly observed, as we hence learn how base their ingratitude is who reject the teaching of the Prophets; for they not only disregarded men, but God himself, as. Christ also declares, "He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you, rejects me." (Luke x. 16.) This form of speaking, then, commends the truth of the doctrine taught by the Prophets; for God comes forth and shews that he speaks by his servants. And on the other hand, we learn what an incomparable blessing it is to have faithful and true teachers; for God, through them and their labours, with certainty declares that he cares for our salvation, as though he watched over us, as though he rose up early, as though he visited us; and the preaching of the Gospel is not without reason called the visitation of God. There is, then, no reason for us to seek anything better, when God is present with us by his word; for we have a sure testimony of his presence whenever true and faithful teachers rise up.

He adds, *to receive correction.* He in tima

מוסר, *musar*, that the Jews had not sinned through ignorance, but that they had been intractable, for they refused to be corrected. The word is, indeed, taken sometimes for doctrine, but it means here correction, even when any one, who generally holds a right course, deviates from the right way, but being warned, repents. We hence see what the Prophet means, even that the Jews had not only closed their eyes against the clear light which shone forth in the Law, but that they had been wholly refractory, so that they could not be subdued when God called them to repentance, that when he sought to heal their diseases, they shewed such stubbornness that they cast aside all correction and discipline.[1] We hence learn that the time of vengeance had come, because God had tried all means to promote their welfare, and had lost, as the common saying is, both pains and cost. It follows,—

34. But they set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it.

34. Et posuerunt abominationes suas in domo super quam invocatum est nomen meum, ad polluendum ipsam.

There was here, as it were, an extreme wickedness, for the Jews had profaned the Temple itself. It was a grievous offence, when every one had, as we have seen, private services at home, where they burned incense on the roofs, and poured libations to foreign gods; but when impiety had gone so far, that even the Temple itself was polluted with idols, what hope was there of repentance?

He says that they had *set their abominations* in the Temple. It is called, indeed, a *house* after the manner of the Hebrews, but it is afterwards distinguished from private buildings, when he says, *on which my name is called*,[2] and then, *that they might defile it.* God here shews that the Temple had been dedicated to him; it was then a sacrilegious

[1] It is true that the word means correction as well as instruction; but as "teaching" is what was previously mentioned, our version, which gives the latter word, seems to present the true meaning here. It is so rendered by *Blayney.—Ed.*

[2] The *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* very incorrectly render the words, "In which my name is called." The *Sept.* and the *Syr.* are the same as our version. It was, no doubt, a house of prayer; but what is here meant is, that it was called God's house.—*Ed.*

profanation when they offered their sacrifices to idols. They were, indeed, already apostates ; but such a sacrilege was not so notorious in their private superstitions as in the Temple; for this was to deprive God of his own honour. Though it was not right in them to abandon themselves to all kind of wickedness when they came forth from the Temple ; yet the Temple itself ought to have continued, as it were, safe and free from every defilement. For this reason, therefore, he says that it was called by his *name*, and then that the Temple itself had been *defiled*, so that they did not spare his sacred name. The rest I shall defer till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou stretchest forth thy hand to us daily, and invitest us also by continual exhortations to repentance,—O grant, that we may not be so ungrateful as by our obstinacy to reject such and so great a benefit; but that, if at any time we should happen to turn from the right way, we may immediately turn to thee and become obedient to thy will, and that thus the medicine which thou hast provided for us may avail for our salvation, until, being at length purified from all vices, we shall enjoy that blessed and immortal glory which thou hast prepared for us in heaven, through thine only-begotten Son, our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirtieth.

35. And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

35. Et adificarunt excelsa ipsi Baal, qui erat in valle filii Hinnom (*vel*, quæ erant,) ad trajiciendum filios suos et filias suas ipsi Moloch (למלך, *idolo*,) quod non mandavi ipsis, et non ascendit in cor meum, ad faciendum abominationem hanc, ut peccaret Jehudah (*vel*, ut peccare facerent Jehudah.)

After having complained of the profanation of his own Temple, God now says that the Jews had sinned through another superstition, even because the valley of the son of Hinnom had become to them a temple instead of the true one. God had forbidden in the Law sacrifices to be offered

except where he appointed, "Thou shalt not do so to thy God, but thou shalt come to the place where he has put the memorial of his name." (Deut. xii. 4, 5.) As God then had expressly testified that sacrifices are not acceptable to him except in one Temple, and on one altar, he shews here that the lawful worship had been corrupted by the Jews, even because they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire in honour to Molech. And yet in a former passage he calls him Baal. Hence it appears, as we said yesterday, that the word Baal includes all kinds of idols. For the Jews, no doubt, while they worshipped their Baalim, ever wished to ascribe to the one true God the chief sovereignty, but, at the same time, they devised patrons for themselves, and hence was the multitude of their gods. But Molech was a particular deity, as we learn from other parts of Scripture.

We now, then, perceive the Prophet's meaning,—that the Jews had not been satisfied with one kind of idolatry, but built high places or altars for themselves; for so do some explain במות, *bemut*: במה, *beme*, means a high place, and is everywhere taken for the groves, as they were called, that is, tall trees. But as mention is here made of a valley, some think that the word high-places is not suitable here; therefore they render the word "altars."[1] As to the main point, God no doubt condemns the Jews here, because they had dared to set up a foreign mode of worship in the valley of Hinnom, when the Law expressly forbade it. The relative אשר, *asher*, as I have said, may be applied to the altars as well as to Baal. But it seems to me a more suitable meaning, if we say that Baal himself, that is, the idol, was in the valley of Hinnom. Of the passing through the fire, I have

[1] In chap. vii. 31, we have "the high places," or elevations, "of Tophet." *Blayney* thinks that they were artificial mounts thrown up for the purpose of performing some of their superstitious rites. Trees were, no doubt, planted on some of the high places; but there might be mounts without trees. That these high places were in a valley, favour the idea that they were artificial mounts without trees. And it indeed appears from this verse and from ch. vii. 31, that the image of Molech was set on the artificial mounts, for it is said that they *built* or erected these high places for this purpose,—that they might *burn* their children to Molech. And, probably, there were several mounts in this valley, in order to accommodate a large number of people.—*Ed.*

spoken elsewhere—it was a kind of lustration. There is no doubt, however, but that some exceeded the moderation commonly observed, who wished to excel others in the fervour of their zeal; for they actually burned their sons and their daughters, which was a deed the most savage. But they yet thought that it was a service acceptable to God. Others performed their superstition in a milder manner, as they deemed it enough that their children should pass through the fire as a symbol of purification, as also the heathens were wont to purify themselves.[1]

But the Prophet speaks of *sons* and of *daughters*, in order to shew that so great was the intemperate zeal of the Jews, that they not only prostituted themselves before their idols, but also contaminated their offspring with these defilements.

He at last says, that he had *commanded* no such thing, and that it never *came to his mind*. We have said elsewhere, that whenever this manner of speaking occurs, God cuts off every handle from objectors, because the superstitious ever have something to allege as a pretence when they are summoned to an account. We know that the Papists, by pretending good intentions, confidently glory against God; and they think that this one pretence is sufficient to defend them against all reproofs; and they think also that the servants of God and the Prophets are too morose and scrupulous when such an excuse does not satisfy them. But God, that he might not tediously contend with the superstitious, assumes this principle,—that whatever they attempt beyond the Law is spurious, and that, therefore, the inventions of men cannot be defended by any disguise or pretence. Let us then know that true religion is always founded on obedience to God's will; and hence everything devised by men, when there is no command of God, is not only frivolous, but also abominable, according to what was said yesterday respecting the work of the hands; and so here the command of God is set in opposition to all the inventions of men. But

[1] There is no ground for this supposition as to the practice in Tophet; for, in other parts of Scripture, what they did is specifically mentioned. In this very book it is said, that they *burnt* their children *in the fire*, ch. vii. 31, and that they *burnt* them as *burnt-offerings* to Baal, ch. xix. 5. See also Deut. xii. 31; Ezek. xxiii. 37.—*Ed.*

as such declarations often occur, I now touch but slightly on this passage.

This doctrine, however, ought to be especially noticed, that is, that there is no need of a long refutation when we undertake to expose fictitious modes of worship, which men devise for themselves according to their own notions, because, after all that they can say, God in one word gives this answer, that whatever he has not commanded in his Law, is vain and mischievous. He then says, that he had *not commanded* this, and that it had never entered into his mind.

God in the last clause transfers to himself what applies only to men; for it cannot be said with strict propriety of God, that this or that had not come to his mind. But here he rebukes the presumption of men, who dare to introduce this or that, and think that an acceptable worship of God which they themselves have presumptuously devised; for they seek thus to exalt their own wisdom above that of God himself. And we even find at this day that the Papists, when we shew that nothing has proceeded from the mouth of God of all the mass of observances in which they make religion to consist, do always allege that they do not without reason observe what has been commanded by the fathers, as though some things had come into the minds of men which had escaped God himself! We then see that God in this place exposes to ridicule the madness of those, who, relying on their own inventive wits, devise for themselves various kinds of worship; for they seek, as we have said, to be wiser than God himself. We now, then, perceive the force of the expression, when God says that it never came to his mind, because men boast that it had not been contrived without reason, and glory in their own acuteness, as though they were able to appoint a better thing than God himself.

He afterwards says, *That they should do this abomination.* God now goes farther, and calls whatever he had not commanded an abomination. And this clause confirms what I have before said, that there is no need of long arguments when the question is respecting the inventions of men, for nothing can be approved of in the worship of God but what he has himself commanded. Whatever therefore has pro-

ceeded from the notions of men, is not only frivolous and useless, but it is also an abomination; for God so represents it in this place. It is therefore not enough at this day to repudiate and to treat with disdain the fictitious modes of worship in which the Papists so much glory; but if we would prove that we have a true zeal for religion, we must abominate all these fictitious things; for God has once for all declared them to be abominable.

He adds, *that Judah might sin*, or, that they might make Judah to sin: either is admissible, and there is a twofold reading.[1] However this may be, he declares that those who build not on the Law, do nothing but sin, though they may think that they render to God the best service, even because they ought to have begun with this principle,—to do nothing but according to what the Law prescribes. It follows,—

36. And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence;

36. Et nunc propterea sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, ad urbem hanc (*vel*, de urbe hac) de qua vos dicitis, Tradita est in manum regis Babylonii in gladio et fame et peste;

37. Behold, I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely;

37. Ecce ego congrego eos ex omnibus terris, ad quas expulero eos in ira mea, et excandescentia mea, et indignatione magna; et reducam eos ad locum hunc, et habitare faciam secure.

God has hitherto been shewing that the Jews were worthy of that extreme punishment with which he had already visited the kingdom of Israel, and that they could not complain of extreme severity, though they were to rot in exile after the ruin of the city and the Temple, for they had polluted the land which ought to have been sacred to God, and had everywhere spread abroad their abominations, so that even the Temple was not free from their filth and defilements, and they had not thus offended for a short time, but, as we have seen, they had despised all warnings; and though God had been solicitous for their safety, they had yet proudly

[1] The *Keri*, והחטיא, "to cause to sin," is no doubt the true reading, even the את before Judah is a proof of it, and it is the meaning given by the versions and the *Targ.*—*Ed.*

I have said that the case with all the reprobate is, that they deride God while he spares and bears with them; but when they find that he is a judge, then they do not look to his mercy, but lie prostrate in despair as though they were lifeless.

We now understand what the design of the Prophet was, when he spoke of the Jews as saying, that the *city was delivered up* to the Chaldeans and the Babylonians, even because the promised deliverance could afford them no comfort, inasmuch as they fully believed that their salvation was hopeless. *Ye* then *say*, he says, *that the city has been delivered up; but I*, he adds, *will gather them from all the lands to which I shall drive them in my wrath and hot displeasure and great indignation.*[1]

Here God promises that the exile would only be temporary, because he would at length gather, as it is said in Ps. cxlvii. 2, the dispersed of Israel. No name is here expressed, but a pronoun; there is however no ambiguity, for it is sufficiently evident that he speaks of the Jews when he says, *I will gather them.* As they had been scattered here and there, the gathering of them might have appeared incredible; for had they been only driven from their own country, and a place of exile had been granted them where they might have lived together, they might have hoped some time to return: but the scattering took away every hope, for they had been driven into different countries, and far distant from each other. In order then to obviate this difficulty, God expressly says that he would restore them *from all the lands into which he had driven them.* And the Prophet no doubt alludes to a passage in Deut. xxx. 4, "Though they be scattered to the four quarters of the world, I will thence gather them." As then God had through Moses promised, that though they were banished into the farthest parts of the world, yet their restoration would not be difficult to him; so the Prophet applies this declaration of Moses to his own prophecy, even that God would gather from the whole of the East those who had been scattered.

[1] This promise clearly shews what *Calvin* says as to their meaning in saying "The city has been delivered up," &c., that is, irretrievably. No, says God, I will restore it.—*Ed.*

He adds, *in my wrath, hot displeasure, and great indignation.*[1] God does not here speak of his wrath, but in order that the Jews might perceive that they deserved so great a punishment: for we know that as God is the judge of the world, nothing unjust can belong to him. When therefore God's wrath is said to be great, we may with certainty conclude that the vices of men are great; for he is never angry with us, except when he is offended by the greatness of our sins. We hence perceive the reason why the Prophet mentions here the *wrath, the hot displeasure and great indignation* of God, even that the faithful might feel assured that God would be propitious to them, though they were worthy of eternal ruin. In short, Jeremiah shews that there would be a place for God's mercy, though the Jews had merited destruction a hundred times through their obstinacy.

And he adds that his favour would be continued, *And I will cause them to dwell safely.* After having promised to them a return, he promises now a tranquil condition: for it would have been better for the Jews to remain always in exile and in foreign lands, than to return to their own country and to live there in misery. This was the reason why the Prophet expressly added, that there would be a quiet habitation for them.

But we know that this was not fulfilled when the Jews returned to their own country; for they were greatly harassed by their neighbours, and the building of the Temple was at first hindered, and they endured many troubles from all quarters, and at length they were oppressed with tyranny by the Syrian kings, and reduced to such extremities, that exile would not only have been more tolerable, but even pleasanter and more desirable, in comparison with the many miseries with which they were oppressed. But, as it has been said elsewhere, whenever the Prophets prophesied of the return of the people, they extended what they taught to the whole kingdom of Christ. For liberation from exile was no more than the beginning of God's favour: God began the

[1] There is a gradation in the words,—wrath, hot wrath, foaming wrath. Extreme displeasure betokens, as *Calvin* intimates, extreme wickedness, and inflicts extreme punishment.—*Ed.*

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We now understand what the design of the Prophet was, when he spoke of the Jews as saying, that the *city was delivered up* to the Chaldeans and the Babylonians, even because the promised deliverance could afford them no comfort, inasmuch as they fully believed that their salvation was hopeless. *Ye* then *say*, he says, *that the city has been delivered up; but I*, he adds, *will gather them from all the lands to which I shall drive them in my wrath and hot displeasure and great indignation.*[1]

Here God promises that the exile would only be temporary, because he would at length gather, as it is said in Ps. cxlvii. 2, the dispersed of Israel. No name is here expressed, but a pronoun; there is however no ambiguity, for it is sufficiently evident that he speaks of the Jews when he says, *I will gather them.* As they had been scattered here and there, the gathering of them might have appeared incredible; for had they been only driven from their own country, and a place of exile had been granted them where they might have lived together, they might have hoped some time to return: but the scattering took away every hope, for they had been driven into different countries, and far distant from each other. In order then to obviate this difficulty, God expressly says that he would restore them *from all the lands into which he had driven them.* And the Prophet no doubt alludes to a passage in Deut. xxx. 4, "Though they be scattered to the four quarters of the world, I will thence gather them." As then God had through Moses promised, that though they were banished into the farthest parts of the world, yet their restoration would not be difficult to him; so the Prophet applies this declaration of Moses to his own prophecy, even that God would gather from the whole of the East those who had been scattered.

[1] This promise clearly shews what *Calvin* says as to their meaning in saying "The city has been delivered up," &c., that is, irretrievably. No, says God, I will restore it.—*Ed.*

He adds, *in my wrath, hot displeasure, and great indignation.*[1] God does not here speak of his wrath, but in order that the Jews might perceive that they deserved so great a punishment: for we know that as God is the judge of the world, nothing unjust can belong to him. When therefore God's wrath is said to be great, we may with certainty conclude that the vices of men are great; for he is never angry with us, except when he is offended by the greatness of our sins. We hence perceive the reason why the Prophet mentions here the *wrath, the hot displeasure and great indignation* of God, even that the faithful might feel assured that God would be propitious to them, though they were worthy of eternal ruin. In short, Jeremiah shews that there would be a place for God's mercy, though the Jews had merited destruction a hundred times through their obstinacy.

And he adds that his favour would be continued, *And I will cause them to dwell safely.* After having promised to them a return, he promises now a tranquil condition: for it would have been better for the Jews to remain always in exile and in foreign lands, than to return to their own country and to live there in misery. This was the reason why the Prophet expressly added, that there would be a quiet habitation for them.

But we know that this was not fulfilled when the Jews returned to their own country; for they were greatly harassed by their neighbours, and the building of the Temple was at first hindered, and they endured many troubles from all quarters, and at length they were oppressed with tyranny by the Syrian kings, and reduced to such extremities, that exile would not only have been more tolerable, but even pleasanter and more desirable, in comparison with the many miseries with which they were oppressed. But, as it has been said elsewhere, whenever the Prophets prophesied of the return of the people, they extended what they taught to the whole kingdom of Christ. For liberation from exile was no more than the beginning of God's favour: God began the

[1] There is a gradation in the words,—wrath, hot wrath, foaming wrath. Extreme displeasure betokens, as *Calvin* intimates, extreme wickedness, and inflicts extreme punishment.—*Ed.*

work of true and real redemption when he restored his people to their own country; but he gave them but a slight taste of his mercy. This prophecy, then, with those which are like it, ought to be extended to the kingdom of Christ. He afterwards adds,—

38. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

38. Et erunt mihi in populum, et ego ero ipsis in Deum.

This promise held the first place in the restoration of the Church; for had the Jews been filled to satiety with wealth and plenty, and all variety of blessings, their condition would still have been by no means superior, had they not been the people of God; for men have no happiness, if they live only on the good things of this earthly and frail life, or on its pleasures and delights. Most truly it is said in the Psalms, "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah." (Ps. cxliv. 15.) For though God commands his own blessings, and designs them as testimonies of his paternal favour towards the godly, yet he will not have them to live as it were on these; but he raises up their minds by means, as it were, of these steps to the spring-head of true felicity, the very fountain itself, so that they may know that they are under his protection, and that he will ever be a Father to them.

We hence see that the Prophet, when he spoke of the restoration of the people, propounded to them the chief and the most desirable thing; even to know that God was reconciled to them, and that they were become thus his people.

We hence learn, that though God in his kindness bore with the infirmities of his ancient people, and so mentioned the fruitfulness of the land and other things, yet the end of all the promises was spiritual; nor would have this promise been true, were it explained only of God's temporal blessings. For we must bear in mind that saying of the Prophet, "Thou art our God, we shall not die." (Hab. i. 12.) And doubtless the Prophet in the Psalm which we have just quoted, meant to distinguish the Church of God from all heathen nations, and meant also to distinguish the felicity of the Church from all the pleasures, honours, and those advantages, by which men persuade themselves they can be made happy, provided they obtain them. Since then the Prophet there

marks the difference between the felicity of the Church and all the fleeting and empty things wished for by those who look no higher than to this world and the present life, it follows, that whenever these words are mentioned, "I will be your God," the hope of an eternal and a celestial life is set before us.

There is another thing to be noticed,—that whatever we seek as to the things of this world can yield us no real good, except God be reconciled to us. When therefore we have all things in abundance, when nothing is wanting as to every kind of pleasure, when we are favoured with great wealth, when peace and security are granted to us, yet all this, as I have said, will prove ruinous to us, except God owns us as his children, and becomes a Father to us. Therefore when we seek to become happy, we must direct our minds to the principal thing, even to be reconciled to God, so that we may be able with confidence to call him our Father, to hope for salvation from him, and ever to flee to his mercy. Ungodly men desire this and that, as their own cupidity leads them: the avaricious wishes for a large quantity of money, wide farms, and great revenues; the ambitious seeks to subdue the whole world; the man of pleasure wishes for everything that may satisfy his lusts, and even he who seems to be moderate, yet desires what is suitable to his disposition; and thus God is neglected, and also his grace. Let us then know that the wishes of men are wholly unreasonable, when they anxiously seek anything in this world except what flows from this fountain, even from the gratuitous favour of God, and when they do not prefer this singular privilege to all blessings, even that God may be reconciled to them.

We now apprehend the meaning of the words, when God declares that the Jews, after their return to their own country, would become his people, and that he would be their God.

Let us at the same time observe, that though God possesses the sovereignty of the whole world, he is not yet properly called the God of any, but of his chosen people; for as he gathers the Church for himself as a peculiar treasure, as he speaks everywhere, so this privilege cannot exist without a mutual relationship, that is, exept men know that God is

their God, and are also fully persuaded that they are counted by him as his peculiar people. Now follows an explanation of this verse, which, on account of its brevity, might seem somewhat obscure.

39. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

39. Et dabo illis cor unum et viam unam, ut timeant me cunctis diebus, ut bene sit illis et filiis eorum post ipsos.

He more clearly explains the last verse; for he mentions the effects of the favour referred to. God indeed includes everything in one word, when he declares that he will be our God, for he thus adopts us as his children. Hence comes the certainty as to our heavenly inheritance, and also as to his mercy, which is better than life. There is then nothing that can be desired beyond this benefit, that is, when God offers himself to us, and deigns to receive and embrace us as his people.

But as I have already said, we do not fully comprehend the benefit of this doctrine; for, first, we are very tardy and dull, we perceive not what God means by this expression, and then we know how much our nature is prone to diffidence, so far is the distance between us and God. Hence this doctrine has need of explanation. Therefore the Prophet, after having pointed out the cause and the beginning of all blessings, now mentions the effects, which more fully confirm what he had said. Hence he says, *I will give to them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever:* for God does not otherwise own us as his people, nor can he be our Father, except he regenerates us by his Spirit; for it is of regeneration that the Prophet here speaks. But I must defer the rest until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since our earthly life is appointed as a life of warfare, and we must necessarily be exposed to continual disquietude as long as we sojourn here,—O grant, that we may always look forward to that blessed rest, to which thou invitest us, and in the meantime remain quiet in dependence on thy protection, and courageously fight to the end, not doubting but that

through thy favour all things shall turn out for good, until we shall at length enjoy that eternal and glorious inheritance, which is laid up for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-First.

We began yesterday to explain the words of Jeremiah, in which are promised to the people *a new heart and a new way.* Now, as God promises these, it is certain that they are in his power, and not in the power of man. We hence learn that it is not in man to form his heart for God's service; for it would have been a superfluous, nay, an absurd promise, had God said, that he would give us a heart which was already ours, or which any one might confer on himself. The promises, then, are sure evidences of God's favour, not only as to the end and effect, but also in order that we may know that God ascribes to himself the praise of all these things which he promises to us. And it is with this argument that *Augustine* often fights against the Palagians, and rightly, because it would be a mere mockery, as I have said, had God promised anything, which depended not on his favour, but on the will and power of man.

When he now speaks of *one heart,* he refers to union and consent, but of such a kind that they all obey God. Men often unite together for evil, and the children of God are often compelled to separate themselves from the ungodly; and hence are those discords which now prevail in the world, the blame of which is cast on us. But as it is necessary for us to separate from the Papists if we wish to follow God, it is better a hundred times to separate from them than to be united together, and thus to form an ungodly and wicked union against God. Agreement or union is, indeed, singularly a good thing, because there is nothing better or more desirable than peace. But we must ever bear in mind, that in order that men may happily unite together, obedience to God's word must be the beginning. The bond, then, of lawful concord among us is this—that we obey God from first to last; for accursed is every union where there is no regard to God and to his word.

We must also observe, that when God promises one heart,

he adds *one way;* and this is to be understood of outward works. And Paul seems to have borrowed from this place when he says that God gives us to *will* and to *do* according to his good pleasure. (Phil. ii. 13.) He mentions "to will" first, and the Prophet names the *heart*, and the heart, we know, is the seat of all the affections. By *one heart*, then, the Prophet means united affections; and then by *way* he means what Paul expresses by "to do;" for it is not enough "to will," except "to do" be added to it; while yet the external work is of itself of no value, except it be preceded by the will and a genuine feeling.

We now, then, understand what the Prophet means: first, he shews how God would become a God to Israel, even because he would give them *one heart* and *one way*. We hence learn, as I have said, that to change the heart, to put off or cast aside corrupt affections, is not in the power of man, because it is a benefit that proceeds from God. But it would not be sufficient for us to be formed for obedience, except God added another favour, even to lead the will itself into action. With regard to concord or union, we have said, that the principle of a right and lawful agreement is, to have regard to God, to depend on his word, and, with one consent, to obey what he commands.

According to this meaning, he afterwards adds, *That they may fear me.* Hence, also, it appears that the fear of God is not otherwise produced than by the regeneration of the Spirit. For were men naturally inclined to fear God, it would not have been ascribed to God and to his grace; and God claims nothing for himself except what is his own. It then follows that the beginning of the fear of God is the regeneration of the Spirit. But we ought to notice the words when he says, that he would *give them one heart* and *one way*, that they might *fear* him; for he does not say, "That they may be able to fear me," or, "That there may be a free option, and yet a flexible will;" but he mentions, so to speak, the actual fear of God, as the result of forming anew the hearts of men.[1] This, I have said, ought to be carefully

[1] "One heart" and "one way," seem to refer to the previous divisions between Israel and Judah. They were before divided in thoughts respect-

observed, because the Papists confess with us tha we are wholly weak as to what is good, and that all our faculties are so corrupt, that the will cannot move itself, nor can any effect follow, without the constant co-operation of the grace of the Holy Spirit; but, at the same time, they imagine that the Holy Spirit does only one half of the work in us; and hence the grace of the Spirit is called by them aid and co-operation. We hence see how far we and the Papists agree; for they are ashamed to deny, that man's nature is so corrupted by original sin as not always to need the grace of the Holy Spirit. But when God claims entirely for himself whatever good there is in us, the Papists concede to him only the half, and imagine a two-fold grace of God, a grace going before and a grace following. What do the Papists mean, or what do they understand by this grace going before? Even that God inspires us with good and pious feelings, so that if we wish we may be free to follow what is right; for, as I have said, the Papists confess that we are under the tyranny of the devil, and slaves to him, and that there is no right will in men, except through the prevenient (*præeunte*) grace of the Holy Spirit. But as I have already said, they talk vainly of the grace of the Spirit, and say that it is an influence by which God enables us to follow that which is right, if we have a will to do so. Thus, then, the grace of God, according to them, leaves men in suspense, so that they are free either to receive or to reject the grace of God. Afterwards, they join the subsequent grace, which, in their view, is a reward; for if I assent to God, that is, if I suffer myself to be ruled by his Spirit, and embrace the grace offered to me, God will then reward me with another grace to confirm me in my right purpose. And thus they confess that perseverance is in part the gift of God; but they always imagine it a co-operating grace. And then, as perseverance, according to them, is God's subsequent grace, and is, as it were, a handmaid, it ceases to be grace, for it is rather the reward of merit. But what does the Prophet say? *I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me.*

ing God, and in the way of worshipping him. This division would no longer exist.—*Ed.*

We hence see that the grace of God is of itself efficacious; and then he does not say that he would give them a power to turn either way, but that he would give them *one heart*, as the same thing is afterwards more clearly expressed. We see then that the one heart or will is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the mere favour of God. This ought in the first place to be borne in mind. We further see that this grace works effectually in men; it not only gives them a free option, but the actual work, as they commonly say, follows, *that they may fear me*, and it is added, *all* their *days*. Here God promises also perseverance as the singular gift of the Holy Spirit; for it would not be sufficient that our hearts should be formed for his service, were he not to sustain us in it; for such is our levity and weakness, that we might every moment fall away from his grace. There is, then, need of grace to preserve us. It hence appears, that not only the beginning of good works proceeds from his Spirit, but also that he enables us to go on to the end; for otherwise there would be no perseverance in a right course.

He adds, *That it may be well with them, and with their children after them.* By these words he intimates, that the Israelites themselves had been the authors of all their evils, because they had not feared God; for they could not have been happy without continuing in obedience to him. And the Prophet confirms what we said yesterday, that external prosperity is in itself evanescent; therefore we ought to seek first the grace of God. But when is it that God is propitious to us? Even when we know him as our Father, and obey his commandments; that is, when we render ourselves submissive to him as it becomes children. It now follows,—

40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

40. Et percutiam (*vel*, insculpam, feriam) cum ipsis fœdus perpetuum, nempe quòd non discedam ab ipsis (*ad verbum*, de post ipsis,) ut benefaciam ipsis, et timorem mei ponam in cordibus ipsorum, ut non discedant a me.

He pursues the same subject; but the repetition is intended emphatically to recommend the grace of God, for we know how men ever strive to withhold the praise due to his grace,

and that on account of their pride. God, then, on the other hand, celebrates in high terms his grace, lest men should malignantly obscure it.

He first says, *I will strike with them a perpetual covenant.* We must notice the contrast between the covenant of the Law, and the covenant of which the Prophet now speaks. He called it in the thirty-first chapter a new covenant, and gave the reason for it, because their fathers had soon fallen away after the Law was proclaimed, and because its doctrine was that of the letter, and deadly, and also fatal. But he now calls it a *perpetual covenant.* That the covenant of the Law was not valid, this was accidental to it; for the Law would remain in force, were we only to keep it; but through men's fault it happened that the covenant of the Law became void and immediately vanished. When, therefore, God promises anything, there is a manifest difference; but what is it? God intimates that his doctrine is set before men with no effect, for it only sounds in their ears, it does not penetrate into their hearts. There is, then, need of the grace of the Holy Spirit; for except God speaks within and touches our hearts, the sound will be to no purpose, only beating the air. We now, then, see why the covenant is called perpetual which God now promises.

We must, at the same time, bear in mind that this covenant peculiarly belongs to the kingdom of Christ. For though it was a part of God's grace, which was manifested in delivering his people from captivity, yet the continued stream of his grace ought to be extended to the coming of Christ. The Prophet then, no doubt, brings Christ before us, together with the new covenant; for without him there is not the least hope that God would make another covenant, as it appears evident from the whole Law and the teaching of the Prophets. Then Christ is here opposed to Moses, and the Gospel to the Law. It hence follows, that the Law was a temporary covenant, for it had no stability, as it was that of the letter; but that the Gospel is a perpetual covenant, for it is inscribed on the heart. And for the same reason it is also called a new covenant, for the Law must have become obsolete, since the perpetuity of which the Prophet speaks has come in its place.

Now follows an explanation, *Because I will not depart*, &c. The אשר, *asher*, here is not a relative, but rather an explanatory or exegetic particle. It then briefly designates the form or nature of the covenant, even that God would never *depart from behind them*. God is sometimes said to go before his faithful people, when he shews to them the right way. He is said also to rule them from behind, as when Isaiah says, "They shall hear a voice behind them, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'" (Isa. xxx. 21.) God no doubt testifies here, that he would be always an Instructor and Teacher to his people. And he says, that he will speak from behind, as schoolmasters follow the pupils committed to their care, even that they may observe and watch all their gestures, walking, words, and everything else. So God compares himself to those teachers to whom children are committed to be taught and trained; and he says that he speaks from behind. We may then explain what is here said in this sense, "I will not depart from after thee:" but we may also take a simpler view, that God would *not depart from them*, even because he would shew them perpetual favour and kindness, according to what is immediately added, *that I may do them good*. In a word, God shews that he would be an eternal Father to his people, who would never forsake nor cast them away.[1]

But the manner or method is also expressed, that he would *put his fear in their hearts, that they might never depart* from him. This is the same doctrine with what we have already seen; it is now repeated, but in other

[1] The אשר may be rendered *that*, or *because*. It would be a perpetual covenant, because he would "not turn from *being* after them to do them good," or, as the *Syr.* is, "from following them to do them good." The *Vulg.* omits אשר, and so does the *Targ.*; the *Syr.* gives it the meaning of *that*, but it is rendered *which*, by the *Sept.*, "which (that is covenant) I will not turn away from behind them," that is, as it seems, from those behind them, *i.e.*, posterity. And this is the meaning which *Blayney* has adopted, "which I will not withdraw from their posterity, to be a benefactor to them;" which last words he evidently connects with the first clause. What favours this rendering is, that "children" are mentioned in the previous verse.

Still, owing to the last clause, the *Syriac* version seems to be the most suitable. There are here two remarkable promises,—that God would not turn away from them,—and that he would put in his fear, so as to keep them from turning away from him.—*Ed.*

words; and thus God; as I said, more fully illustrates his favour. He says then that he would *put* his *fear* in the *hearts* of men. We now see how that puerile fiction is refuted, with which the Papists are inebriated, when they say that God's grace co-operates, because the Spirit helps the infirmity of men, as though they themselves brought something of their own and were co-operators. But the Prophet here testifies that the fear of God is the work and gift of the Holy Spirit. He does not say I will give them power to fear me, but I *will put my fear in their hearts.* We then see that he again shews that the Spirit works effectually in us, so as to form anew our affections, and does not leave us capable of turning or suspended. The same thing is said by Ezekiel, "And I will cause them to fear me." (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) Thus the same doctrine is confirmed there, for it is said, that God would make Israel to fear him, not that they might be able to fear him.

He adds again, *That they may not depart from me.* We see that clearly refuted are those foolish notions about neutral grace, which offers only power to men, which they may afterwards receive if they please; for the Prophet says, "that they may not depart from me." Thus he again shews that perseverance, no less than the commencement of acting rightly, is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit: and as I have already said, were God only to form our hearts once, that we might be disposed to act rightly, the devil might, at any moment, entice us, by his wiles, from the right way, or, as he employs sudden and violent attacks, he might drive us up and down as he pleases. To rule us then for one hour would avail us nothing, except God preserved us through the whole course of our life, and led us on to the end. It hence then follows, that the whole course of our life is directed by the Spirit of God, so that the end no less than the beginning of good works ought to be ascribed to his grace. Whatever merit then men claim for themselves, they take away from God, and thus they become sacrilegious.

A question may, however, be here raised: we see that the faithful often stumble, not ten times during life, but every day: how then is this, that where God's Spirit works, his

efficacy is such that men never turn aside from the right way? Were any to answer, that the faithful indeed stumble, but do not wholly fail, and that God here refers to that defection which shakes off every fear of God, it would not be a full solution. For we see that even the elect themselves are sometimes like apostates, for the fear of God and piety are, as it were, choked in them. Piety is not indeed extinguished, but not even a spark of the Spirit appears in them. But we must notice, that inflexible perseverance is given to the faithful, so that when they fall, they soon repent. Hence interruptions are no hinderances that God should not guide them from the starting-post to the goal, until they complete their whole course. And thus true is what Augustine says, that the Spirit so works in us, that we invariably have a good will. For he compares our state with that of Adam, such as he was in his first creation. We know that Adam was then without any stain, for he was formed in the image of God: he was then upright and free from every vice. We are as yet imperfect; though God has regenerated us by his Spirit, there abide in us still some remnants of the flesh, and we do not run with so much alacrity as it behoves us; nay, we are constrained to exclaim with Paul, that we are "wretched," and to confess that we do not the good which we would, but the evil which is hateful to us. (Rom. vii. 15.) Then the condition of Adam seems to have been better than ours. To this Augustine replies,—that God deals better with us now than he did with Adam, our first parent; for though he created him just and innocent, and without any stain, yet he gave him a nature liable to a change; and hence Adam, having a free-will, immediately fell. To what end then did free-will serve? even that man immediately fell and brought us into the same ruin with himself. This is the praise of free-will! even that man, possessed of it, cast himself down into the lowest abyss, whence he could never of himself have risen. But now, with respect to us, though we halt, and also turn out of the right way, and our depraved lusts entice us to evil, and our corruption hinders us from running as we desire to do, yet our condition is far better, because God endues us amidst all our conflicts with

the power of his own Spirit, so that we are never overcome or overwhelmed. This indefectible constancy, (*indeclinabilis constantia,*) as Augustine calls it, is then far superior to the excellency and honour which Adam at first possessed. This may be clearly gathered from the words of the Prophet when he says, that God would *put his fear in the hearts* of his people, so that they may *never depart* from him.

It may be again asked, why is there no mention made of gratuitous justification? for the covenant of God cannot be valid, except he reconciles us to himself, for regeneration is not sufficient for the obtaining of God's favour, as in part only we will rightly and act rightly. To this we answer, that there is no doubt but that God includes faith in the word *fear;* hence remission of sins, by which men return into favour with God, is not excluded when regeneration is spoken of. This passage may at the same time be explained in this way, that the Prophet states a part for the whole. Doubtless the new covenant, as we have before seen, consists of two parts, even that God, in adopting us as his children, forgives us, and pardons all our infirmities, and then governs us by his Spirit: but here he speaks only of the last. So the sentence may be viewed as including a part for the whole. Still the Scripture, as it has been said, when it speaks of God's fear, often includes faith, for God, as the Psalmist says, cannot be feared, except we taste of his goodness, "With thee is propitiation, that thou mayest be feared." (Psalm cxxx. 4.) For there would be no reverential fear of God, except it were preceded by a knowledge of his paternal favour.

41. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.

41. Et lætabor super ipsos beneficiendo ipsis, et plantabo eos in terra hac, in veritate (*id est,* fideliter,) in toto corde meo, et in tota anima mea.

When God says that he would take pleasure in doing good to his people, he adopts the language of man, for fathers rejoice when they can do good to their children. God then, as the paternal love with which he regards his people could not have been otherwise expressed, made use of this similitude. Further, the contrast also ought to be noticed, even

that God had rejoiced when he punished his people for their wickedness. For God delights in judgment as well as in mercy. God then for a time rejoiced when he punished the people; for as his judgment is right, he delights in it. But now he says that he would manifest his paternal affection, so as to take pleasure in doing them good.

He adds, *I will plant them in this land.* He had indeed planted them, when, by Joshua, the possession of the land was given them, according to what is said in the 80th Psalm, where a similar expression is used, even that God had brought his vine out of Egypt, and planted it in the promised inheritance. (Psalm lxxx. 8.) But afterwards the people were plucked up by the roots. Hence the first possession of the land to the time of the exile was not, strictly speaking, a plantation, for the people did not then strike firm roots. God then promises here something new and unusual, when he speaks of a plantation. Nor is there a doubt but the perpetuity, of which mention has been made, is intended; for this plantation of the people depends on the covenant, and the covenant is not temporary as before the exile, but perpetual in its duration.

We now then understand what the Prophet means when he compares to a plantation the restoration of the people after their return from exile. We know, indeed, that the people from that time had not been banished, and that the Temple had ever stood, though the faithful had been pressed down with many troubles; but this was only a type of a plantation. We must therefore necessarily pass on to Christ, in order to have a complete fulfilment of this promise. The beginning, as we have said, and I am often compelled to repeat this, is to be taken from this return; but Christ is not to be excluded from that liberation which was like the morning star, before the sun of righteousness itself appeared in its own splendour. When Christians explain this passage and the like, they leave out the liberation of the people from Babylonish exile, as though these prophecies did not belong at all to that time; in this they are mistaken. And the Jews, who reject Christ, stop in that earthly deliverance. But the Prophets, as I have said, begin with the return of

the people, but they set Christ also in the middle, that the faithful might know that that return was but a slight taste of the full grace, which was alone to be expected from Christ; for it was then, indeed, that God really planted his people.

Further, when the Jews were afterwards expelled from the land of Canaan, it was owing to their ingratitude; and it was a total abdication. In the meantime, however, God planted there his own vine until Jerusalem was extended and had its limits in the farthest parts of the earth: and we are said to be grafted in Christ and planted, when God adopts us into his Church; and hence that saying of Christ, "Every tree which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matt. xv. 13.) Let us then know that the Church was planted in Judea, for it remained to the time of Christ. And as Christ has pulled down the wall of partition, so that there is now no difference between Jews and Gentiles, God plants us now in the holy land, when he grafts us into the body of Christ.

He says, *in truth*, that is, faithfully, so as never to pull them up again. And he adds, *with my whole heart and with my whole soul.* The words are indeed singular, for God transfers to himself the affections and feelings of men; but it is necessary that he should in a manner transform himself, that he may be understood by us; for unless he prattled, where would be found so much understanding as would reach the immense altitude of his wisdom? As then the mysteries with which he favours us are incomprehensible, it is necessary that he should accommodate himself to our limited capacities. By the *whole heart*, then, and the *whole soul*, he means that faithfulness and constancy which will ever endure until the faithful shall obtain eternal life. Integrity in man is called the whole heart, because there may be a double heart. It cannot, it is true, be for this reason applied to God or to his nature. But as I have already said, he says by a similitude that he would do this with the whole heart, because he will do it so perfectly that there will be nothing wanting to render salvation complete, and the same thing is also meant by *truth;* though some philosophize more refinedly as to this word, for by truth they understand

the firmness or veracity of the promises.[1] But we know that according to the usage of the Hebrew language, that truth means often what is solid and perpetual. He means then that the plantation would be so firm and solid, that there would be no danger that the people would ever be removed elsewhere, even because there would be a living root, as we have explained: the Church was fixed in Judea until the coming of Christ, who brought in the real accomplishment of this plantation; for when we are grafted into him, we already in a manner possess eternal life and are become the citizens of heaven.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are by nature wholly addicted to evil and bring nothing from the womb but depravity,—O grant, that being regenerated by thy Spirit we may strive to please and obey thee; and as our frailty is such that we may at any moment fall away, supply thou us with firmness and constancy, that we may never faint in the middle of our course, but so constantly obey thee, that we may at length enjoy that blessed rest, which is prepared for us, after we shall have passed through our earthly warfare, in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Second.

42. For thus saith the Lord, Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

42. Quia sic dicit Jehova, Quemadmodum venire feci super populum hunc omne malum hoc grande, sic ego reducam super eos bonum quod ego pronuntio super eos.

God shews here again to his Prophet that exile would be temporary as to the remnant; for we know that the greater part of the people had been wholly rejected; but it pleased

[1] The word אמת most commonly means *reality* in opposition to dissimulation or pretence, or what is only apparent; *truth* in opposition to falsehood, and *stability* in opposition to what is evanescent and temporary. The planting was to be a *real* planting, and not one in disguise or appearance. The following words explain the meaning, "with all my heart and with all my soul," that is, with sincerity and earnestness, or, with the full purpose of mind and with the full assent of the will and affections. —*Ed.*

the Lord, that his Church should survive, though very small in number. Then this promise is not to be extended indiscriminately to all the twelve tribes, but refers especially to the elect, as the event sufficiently proved, and Paul also is a most faithful interpreter of this truth. And this ought to be carefully borne in mind, because hypocrites always steal for themselves whatever God promises to his faithful people, while yet they falsely pretend his name. Let us then understand the design of God, even that his purpose was to support with strong confidence his chosen, lest despair should close up the avenue to prayer. Since, then, a portion of the people remained, that the Church might not wholly be cut off, this promise was fulfilled; and as we can never embrace the promise of mercy, except repentance and acknowledgment of sin precede, the two things are here referred to by the Prophet.

He says that God had *made to come*, or had brought, a dreadful calamity; and it then follows, that he would *bring* on them *all the good* that he had promised. By these words God intimates that what he had before promised would not be difficult for him to accomplish, because he could heal the wound which he had inflicted. Had the Chaldeans, as it had been said elsewhere, taken the city according to their own will, the remedy might have been difficult; but as God had employed the Chaldeans, and as they had fought, as it were, under his banner, it was an easy thing for him to restore the city, and to recall from exile those whom his righteous vengeance had banished.

We must notice especially what is said, *I will render to them all the good* which I have spoken concerning them. For God shews on what support the faithful were to rely in hoping for their liberation; he bids them to depend on his own mouth; for whatever men may promise is evanescent and without fruit. If, then, we would have our hope to be firmly fixed, so that it may not disappoint us, let us learn to rely on God's promises, so that no one of us may presumptuously dream of this or that, as we thus often deceive ourselves; but let us acquiesce in the word of God. But when the evidence of God's grace fails us, we may have recourse to many

confidences, but it will be without profit. We now perceive why the Prophet expressly added this particular respecting God's word. It follows,—

43. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, *It is* desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

44. Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal *them*, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord.

43. Et acquiretur ager in terra hac de qua vos dicitis, Deserta est ab homine et jumento, tradita est in manum Chaldæorum.

44. Agros pecunia ement, scribendo in libro, et obsignando, et obtestando testes in terra Benjamin, et per circuitus Jerusalem, et in urbibus Jehudah, et in urbibus montanis, et in urbibus campestribus, (*quanquam alii volunt esse propriu nomen, sed hoc non convenit,*) et in urbibus austri, (*id est*, quæ respiciunt versus austrum,) quia reduco captivitatem eorum, dicit Jehova.

He confirms the prediction respecting the return of the people, and makes application of the vision which had been presented to the Prophet; for he had been commanded, as we have seen, to buy a field in the land of Benjamin. God now then annects that sign to the prophecy; for the use of signs is to secure faith to doctrine, which yet deserves of itself to be believed, and is fully authentic, and of itself worthy of belief; it is however conceded to our infirmity, that signs are given us, in order that the promises may be more fixed and ratified in our hearts.

This order God now follows, and says, *Yet bought shall a field be in this land.* The verb קָנָה, *kone*, means to acquire or to buy and to possess; but as in the next verse he says, *Buy shall they with money a field*, the meaning ought not to be changed. *Bought* then *shall be a field* (the singular for the plural) *in this land, of which ye say,*[1] *Deserted it is by man and beast.* The chief men did not say this, as we have elsewhere shewn; nay, when Jeremiah declared this to them,

[1] This is not the literal rendering of the Hebrew, but the following,—

Which, ye say, *is* desolate, without man or beast,
Given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Had "which" been governed by "say," there would have been a pronoun after it with a preposition prefixed. The *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and *Arab.* have retained the right construction, though the *Vulg.* has not. "Without," *i.e.*, with not, or not with, is literally the Hebrew, מִבְּלִי.—*Ed.*

he was ill treated and cruelly dealt with by them ; for it was a thing difficult to be believed that the land, which was as it were the sacred habitation of God, should be laid waste by the Chaldeans. God had indeed called it his rest, and it had been given as a heritage to the children of Abraham. The Jews, then, did not originate this saying ; nay, it was God himself. But this question has been solved elsewhere ; they did not indeed speak of the desolation of the land in the same sense or manner as God did ; for when the Prophets threatened them with the desolation of the land, they always added the hope of deliverance and of a return ; but they, when that calamity happened to them, cast aside every hope, and gave themselves up wholly to despair. And it is a usual thing with the ungodly to ridicule all God's threatenings as long as he spares them or defers their punishment ; but when God makes it known that he speaks in earnest, then they are swallowed up with despair, and conclude that nothing remains for them.

This, then, is what Jeremiah upbraids his own nation with, that is, that they cast off from themselves every hope, while yet God had fixed for them the term of seventy years. While God then was stretching forth his hand to them, they chose rather thus to sink in the abyss of despair, so that nothing could alleviate their minds. This ingratitude the Prophet justly condemns ; for they considered their land as devoted to perpetual ruin, when yet its restoration had been promised to them ; as though he had said, "The mercy of God and his faithfulness will surpass all your wickedness ; but ye, as far as you can, extinguish his promises, abolish his grace, and give no place to his promises : nevertheless he will complete what he has promised ; for though the land is falsely deemed by you to be given up for ever to destruction, yet the Lord will cause it to be inhabited by its own legitimate heirs, even the children of Abraham." This is the reason why he intimates that the Jews had regarded the land as given up to perpetual desolation.

To shew more fully what is said in the preceding verse, he adds, *Fields with money shall be bought, and by writing* (the verbs are in the infinitive mood) they *shall write on tablets*

and sign by witnesses even *in the land of Benjamin.*[1] Then the Prophet mentions all the boundaries by which Jerusalem was surrounded. We know that a part of the city was in the lot of Benjamin, and even one gate was so called: *in the land of Benjamin*, he says, and also *through the circuits of Jerusalem, even in the cities of Judah*, those on the *mountains*, as well as those *in the valley, and in the cities* which lie to *the south*, even Egypt, for the southern country was towards Egypt. The reason is added, *Because God* would *restore* their *captivity*, that is, restore the captives that they might again possess the land. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time, (while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison,) saying,

2. Thus saith the Lord, the maker thereof, the Lord that formed it, to establish it; The Lord *is* his name;

3. Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

4. For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword;

5. They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *it is* to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in mine anger, and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.

6. Behold, I will bring it health

1. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam secundo, cum ipse adhuc captivus esset in atrio custodiæ, dicendo,

2. Sic dicit Jehova, faciens ipsam, Jehova formans ipsam, ad stabiliendum ipsam; Jehova nomen ejus;

3. Clama ad me, et respondebo tibi, et annunciabo tibi res magnificas et reconditas, quas non novisti:

4. Quia sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, super domibus urbis hujus, super domibus regum Jehudah, quæ dirutæ fuerunt catapultis (*vel*, balistis, *vel*, machinis aliis) et gladio, (*alii autem vertunt*, ad catapultas, *vel*, balistas, *vel*, alias munitiones, et ad gladium; *dicemus postea de sensu: hæc omnia legenda sunt uno contextu;*)

5. Venerunt ad præliandum cum Chaldæis, et ad replendas ipsas (domos) cadaveribus hominum, quos percussi in ira mea et indignatione mea, et quia abscondi faciem meam ab hac urbe propter universam malitiam ipsorum;

6. Ecce ego adduco illi restitutio-

[1] The infinitives in Hebrew are often as in *Welsh*, verbal nouns. The rendering may be made as follows,—

Fields with money shall they buy;
And *there shall be* writing in a book,
And sealing, and the witnessing of witnesses,
In the land of Benjamin, &c. &c.

Our version is the *Syr.* and nearly the *Tary.*—*Ed.*

and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.	nem et sanationem, et sanabo eos, et aperiam ipsis multitudinem pacis et veritatis (*alii vertunt*, orationem.)

This prophecy refers to the same subject; nor was it to be wondered at, that God spoke so much of the same thing, for it was necessary to render the Jews inexcusable, as they always pretended ignorance, except God made frequent repetitions. And this was also the reason why Paul said, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything should be established, when he said that he would come the second and the third time to Corinth. (2 Cor. xiii. 1.) He intimated that his coming would not be useless, for except they repented they could not have escaped by pretending ignorance, as hypocrites are wont to do. It was, then, God's purpose to confirm by many prophecies what he had once testified respecting the restoration of the people; but he had an especial care for the faithful, that they might not grow faint and succumb under those many trials which remained for so long a time; for as some died in exile, they might have forgotten the covenant of God, and thus the soul might have perished with the body. And those who were to return to their own country had need of no common support, so that they might continue firm for seventy years, and rely with confidence on God's mercy. We now, then, understand why God repeated the doctrine as to the return of the people.

It is said that the *word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah* while he was yet in *prison*. Then the Prophet was bidden to consult the benefit of his enemies, and to promote their welfare, however unworthy they were through their ingratitude; for though they had not all demanded his death, yet the greater part of them had clamorously condemned him, and he had been with difficulty delivered, and was now lying in prison. It was a great cruelty that the people, while he was faithfully discharging his prophetic office, should thus furiously rage against him. He is, however, bidden still to proceed in the duties of his office, to comfort them, to ease their grief, and to afford them some alleviation in their evils and miseries.

There is also no doubt but that it was profitable to Jeremiah himself; for it was a most iniquitous reward, that he should, while serving God faithfully and conscientiously, be cast

ignominiously into prison, and be there kept a captive so long. It was, then, some mitigation of his grief, that God appeared to him in that very prison; it was an evidence that God esteemed him higher than all the Jews. God did not then speak in the Temple, nor throughout the whole city. The prison then was God's sanctuary, and there he gave responses to his Prophet, though he was wont to do this before from the mercy-seat, from the ark of the covenant. We hence see how great was the honour that God was pleased at that time to bestow in a manner on a prison, when he had forsaken his own Temple.

Now follows the prophecy, the substance of which is, that though the city was to be given up into the hand of the king of Babylon, yet that calamity was not to be perpetual, for God at length, after the completion of seventy years, would restore it. But why this promise was given has been stated already: it was given that the faithful might submit patiently to God, and suffer themselves with calm minds to be chastised, and also recumb on the hope the promise gave them, and thus feel assured, that as they were smitten by God's hand, their punishment would prove their medicine and an aid to their salvation. Now, then, we perceive what this prophecy is, and also for what purpose it was delivered.

But before God promised anything respecting the return of the people, he strengthened the mind of the Prophet by a preface, and also encouraged and animated the godly to entertain good hope. The preface is, that God created and *formed Jerusalem.* There was, then, no doubt but he would at length rescue it from the hands of enemies; nay, that he would raise it up even from hell itself. To prove this, he says that he is *Jehovah.* We hence see why the Prophet, before he recited the promise, honoured God with magnificent titles. But it is doubtful whether the past or the present time is to be understood, when it is said, *Jehovah the maker of it, Jehovah the former of it;* for either would be suitable,—that is, that God at the beginning built Jerusalem and was its founder, or that he had purposed again to create and form it anew. If the past time be taken, then the meaning is, that the city, which had been built by God,

could not possibly perish, because his will was that it should remain perpetually. And the same sentiment often occurs in the Prophets, and also in the Psalms. For it was God's design to be regarded as the founder of Jerusalem, in order that he might distinguish it from all other cities of the world. We know that there is nothing under the sun perpetual, for the whole world is subject to various changes; nay, "the fashion of this world," as Paul says, "passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31.) As, then, changes so various take place in all cities, God, by a singular privilege, exempted Jerusalem from this common lot; and hence the Prophet truly and wisely concludes, that the ruin of the city would not be perpetual, because God had formed it. And hence its future restitution is sufficiently proved.

But if any one prefers the present time, then the meaning would be, that he who had resolved to create and form Jerusalem is *Jehovah*, the God of hosts: no one then can hinder his work. As this sense is not unsuitable, I do not reject it, though I follow the former. We must, at the same time, bear in mind this principle,—that restoration is promised to the Jews, because Jerusalem had been, as it were, chosen by God, so that he took it under his care and protection, so as to preserve it perpetually. Whether then we take the words to be in the past or present time, that God is the creator and former of Jerusalem, we see that the promise of deliverance is founded on the mercy of God, even because he had chosen Jerusalem for his own habitation, according to what is in the Psalms, "His foundations are on the holy mountains." (Ps. lxxxvii. 1.) And there, also, the pronoun is used instead of God's name, as here instead of the city's name, *Thus saith Jehovah, who has created it, who has formed it, that he might establish it.* Here Jerusalem is not named; but the narrative is much more emphatical than if it was expressed, as also in the place we have just quoted, the word God is not given, nor the word Church, if I mistake not, in the 37th chapter of Isaiah. When the Prophet says, "His foundations are on the holy mountains," there is no doubt but that the word God is to be understood, though not expressed. So here,

when speaking of the city, he says that Jehovah *formed it*, or will form it.[1]

He adds, *Jehovah is his name.* Here he exalts the power of God, that the Jews might not set up against him what otherwise might have terrified them, and, as it were, reduced them to a lifeless state, and caused them wholly to faint away. He, therefore, sets before their eyes the power of God, as though he had said, that there would be no obstacle which could delay God's work, for he had resolved to form and create anew his own city after its demolition; it is, in a word, the same as though he had bidden the people to turn their eyes and all their thoughts to God, to consider his immeasurable power, and so to entertain hope, and thus to look down, as it were, from on high on all the impediments which might have otherwise wholly weakened their confidence.

He afterwards adds, *Cry to me, and I will answer thee, and I will announce to thee things magnificent and recondite, which thou hast not known.* It was not so much for the sake of the Prophet as of others that this was said. For the Prophet, no doubt, had earnestly prayed, and his prison must have inflamed his ardour, so as to intercede constantly with God. God then does not here reprove his torpor or his sloth by saying, *Cry to me;* but as I have said, the word is so directed to the Prophet, that God excites all the godly to pray. There is indeed here an implied reproof, as though he had said that it was their fault that God did not cheer their minds with a joyful and happy message, for they had closed the door against themselves, so as to prevent God from offering them that comfort which they yet especially wished; but men, while they expect God to be propitious to them, do not yet give entrance to his grace, because they bolt up, as it were,

[1] The *Sept.* give the present time, "who makes," &c.; the *Vulg.* the future, "who will make," &c.; and the *Syr.* and the *Targ.* in the past, "who made," &c. The verse may be thus rendered,—

Thus saith Jehovah,—
Made it hath Jehovah,
Having formed it in order to establish it;
Jehovah *is* his name.

That the city is meant cannot be disputed, as the word itself is introduced in the 4th verse, and at the end of the 5th verse. In the *Sept.* it is land, "who makes the land," and in the *Syr.*, "who made thee:" both which are no doubt wrong.—*Ed.*

their hearts with unbelief. We hence see why it was said, *Cry to me, and I will answer thee.*

But this passage ought especially to be noticed; for we may hence conclude, that whenever we pine away in sorrow, or are worn out by affliction, it is our own fault, because we are tardy and slow to pray: for every one who cries acknowledges that God is always nigh, as he promises in the Psalms, to those who truly call on him. That we are then sometimes worn out with long grief, and no comfort given to us, this happens, let us know, through our neglect and sloth, because we cry not to God, who is ever ready to answer us, as he here promises.

And he says, *I will declare to thee great things, and of hidden things thou knowest not.* So are the words literally; but they cannot be thus suitably rendered: then we may read, "and things hidden which thou knowest not," or, "I will make thee acquainted with hidden things which are unknown to thee." It may, however, be asked, why God called those things hidden, of which Jeremiah had already prophesied? The answer is obvious,—that they had, as it were, made void all the promises of God, and the holy man might have been even confounded, when he saw that God's favour was thus rejected; for it was reasonable to conclude, that as the people obstinately rejected the hope of deliverance, it was all over with them, and that their condition was, as it were, hopeless. We hence see that those things are often hidden to us which God has again and again made known to us; for either they do not immediately penetrate into our minds, or the memory of them is extinguished, or faith is not so vigorous in us as it ought to be, or we are disturbed and confounded by obstacles thrown in our way.

He now expresses what these hidden things were, *As to the houses*, he says, (so it is literally,) *thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, as to the houses of this city, and as to the houses of the kings of Judah.* The proposition עַל, upon, often means with regard to, concerning. He names the *houses* of the kings, for the kings of Judah were not satisfied, as it is well known, with one palace, but had many houses without the city. *As to the houses*, he says, *which had been*

thrown down. This is variously explained; the houses, say some, had been pulled down for the warlike engines, that is, that these engines might be made from the materials, and for the sword. The sense, however, would appear more obvious were we to take this view, that the houses had been thrown down by the warlike engines, and also by the sword, that is, by the violence of the enemies. The word, סללת, *sallut*, as it has been already stated, is rendered by some fortifications; but when the storming of cities is spoken of, it means no doubt warlike machines, such as the engines to throw darts, or battering-rams: but we know not in what form they were made by the Jews and the Chaldeans.

There are two parts to this prophecy,—that the Jews were about to perish through their own fault,—and that they were to be restored through the favour and goodness of God alone. Here, then, in the first place, the Prophet condemns the false confidence of the people, who stoutly resisted the Chaldeans. *They came,* he says, *to fight with the Chaldeans;* but what would be the issue of the battle? even to *fill,* he says, *with the carcases of men their very houses.* When he says that the Jews were *come,* he speaks of what had already, as it were, taken place. It is indeed a participle in the present tense, *coming;* but the Prophet here sets before their eyes what was to be, as though he had said, "The Jews will boldly rush forth, and will think themselves equal, and even superior to the Chaldeans; thus they will arm themselves with courage for the battle." Then he says this, in order to ridicule the audacity of the people. The sad issue of the fight follows, the filling of their own houses with the carcases of men. The copulative is redundant, or it must be taken as explanatory, and rendered, even. *They shall come* then *to fight, even that they may fill their own houses with carcases,* and thus inflame the fury of their enemies.[1] For

[1] These two verses have been improperly separated, so that בּאים, "coming," stands by itself without connection with anything; it ought to be *in regimine* with "sword." The versions vary, but none give any tolerable meaning. The verses may be thus rendered,—

4. For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,
Concerning the houses of this city,
And concerning the houses of the kings of Judah,—

it hence happened that the Chaldeans shed more blood, and spared not the mass of the people; because we know that when a city is won by force, more cruelty is exercised, and the slaughters become much greater. Had the Jews willingly surrendered, they would have received more humanity at the hand of their conquerors; but the Chaldeans became implacable, because their fury had been kindled by the pertinacity of the people fighting against them. God, at the same time, shews that the Chaldeans would not be victorious through their own valour, but because he himself would *smite* or slay the Jews. Then he ascribes to his own vengeance the calamity which might have seemed to proceed from the Chaldeans; for Jeremiah could not have exhorted the people to repentance except he shewed that it happened through a righteous judgment, that the Chaldeans so cruelly raged against them. But we must defer the rest until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that we may so learn to humble ourselves under thy mighty hand, whenever thou chastisest us, that we may not faint in our miseries, but flee to thy mercy with more confidence, and by acknowledging our sins, may become so displeased with ourselves, that we may never lose the taste of thy mercy, but gird ourselves up so as to entertain good hope, and call upon thee, until we shall at length find by success that our prayers are not in vain; and may we ever thus find comfort in our evils, so that we may at length enjoy that perfect felicity, which thou hast prepared for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Which are thrown down by the engines,
5. And by the sword of those who come
To make war, even the Chaldeans,
And to fill them [*i.e.*, houses] with the carcases of the men,
Whom I have smitten in mine anger,
And in my wrath, and for all whose wickedness
I have hidden my face from this city,—
6. Behold, I will bring, &c. &c.

The present and past time in the 4th and 5th verses, is used for the future, which is often the case in prophecies.—*Ed.*

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Third.

I WAS compelled yesterday to stop at the second clause of the fifth verse, where God declares that the Jews were *slain* by him, while they were exerting all their strength to resist. He then says that that slaughter happened to the city and to the people, because they had sinned against him. But he says, first, I have *slain* them, and then, *I have hid my face from this city*, and he also adds the reason, *on account of all their wickedness.* Then he declares that he was the author of that slaughter, and he also shews that in just judgment he punished the wickedness of the people. For as they had never ceased for a long time to provoke his vengeance, he here shews that they deserved that reward, even of having their city forcibly taken by the Chaldeans, and also of being everywhere slain, and of having their houses filled with dead bodies.

He afterwards says, *Behold, I will bring a renewal and a healing, and I will heal them.* This is the main point, as they say, in the passage. He had been hitherto shewing, that the Jews had deserved so heavy a punishment, because by their obstinacy they had not ceased to provoke God against themselves. But he promises here to be propitious to them after having moderately corrected them. For we have said, that the design of this prophecy was to sustain the Jews, so that they might not despond, but rely on the promise of favour, however bitter exile might be. Then he says, *I will bring a renewal,* or restoration, *and a healing.*[1]

And it is added, *I will open to them abundance of peace and of truth.* Some render the last word, אֱמֶת, *amet,* prayer; for the verb אָמַן, *amen,* means sometimes to pray and also to multiply. There may then be a twofold meaning; the first, that God would open to them an access to prayer; for things were so hopeless among the people, that no one dared to utter a word. Even Jeremiah himself was forbidden to

[1] The word rendered "renewal," means lengthening, that is, of man's life; hence it is taken in the sense of recovery,—"I will bring to it a recovery and a healing." See chap. viii. 22.—*Ed.*

pray, (chap. xi. 14;) because God had resolved to destroy those miserable men respecting whom there was no hope of repentance. Some therefore understand that an access to prayer is here promised, so that the faithful and the servants of God might pray for the prosperity of the city. But this explanation seems to me to be too far-fetched. I take, therefore, a simpler interpretation,—that God would give them abundance of peace, or rather the prolonging or continuance of peace. By peace is meant, as it is well known, a happy state. Then to Jerusalem, reduced to extreme miseries, God promises joyful things, so that she should afterwards live prosperously; and he adds the word *truth*, which is to be taken here for stability,[1] as, indeed, everywhere in Scripture, as though he had said, that the prosperous state of the city would not be for a month, or a short time, but continual and even perpetual, as he declares in the next verse.

7. And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel, to return, and will build them, as at the first.

7. Et reducam captivitatem Jehudah, et captivitatem Israel, et ædificabo eos sicuti a principio.

By the word *building*, God means that they would return to their own country for this end—that they might remain secure in it. And this promise was very needful, since the Jews were on every side surrounded by enemies; for all their neighbours had united together against them, and were most hostile, so that they never ceased to create new troubles. For this reason mention is made of *building*, as though the Prophet had said, that the prosperity of the city would be lasting, for it would be so founded, that it would not fall or totter at any kind of assault.

But he promises deliverance, not only to the tribe of Judah, but also to the whole kingdom of Israel. Though very few returned, yet God offered the benefit which he had promised to all in common: and then, as it has been often said, this promise is to be extended to the coming of Christ. For God confined not his favour to those few years in which liberty

[1] The best word for it here, as given by the *Syr.*, is *security*; "And I will unfold to them abundance of peace and security."—*Ed.*

was granted to the Jews, when they returned from their exile in Babylon; but included the eternal salvation which remained for them, of which the prelude was their return. Let us now proceed,—

8. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

8. Et purgabo eos ab omni iniquitate eorum, qua peccarunt mihi (*hoc est*, in me,) et ignoscam omnibus iniquitatibus eorum quibus peccarunt in me, et quibus scelerate egerunt contra me.

He says first, that he would *cleanse them from all iniquity*, and then, that he would be propitious to *all their iniquities*. He no doubt repeats the same thing; but the words are not superfluous, for it was necessary seriously to remind the Jews of their many vices, of which indeed they were conscious, and yet they did not repent. As then they perversely followed their own wills, it was needful for the Prophet to goad them sharply, so that they might know that they were exposed to eternal destruction, if God's mercy, and that by no means common, came not to their aid. Here, then, he represents the greatness of their sins, that he might on the other hand extol the mercy of God.

By the word *cleanse*, one might understand regeneration, and this may seem probable to those who are not well acquainted with the language of Scripture; but כִּפֶּר, *theer*, means properly to expiate. This then does not refer to regeneration, but to forgiveness. Hence I have said, that the Prophet mentions two things here in the same sense,—that God would *cleanse them from iniquity*,—and that he would *pardon all their iniquities*. We see now the reason why the Prophet used so many words in testifying that God would be so merciful to them as to forgive their sins, even because they, though loaded with many vices, yet extenuated their heinousness, as hypocrites always do. The favour of God, then, would never have been appreciated by the Jews had not the atrocity of their guilt been clearly made known to them. And this also was the reason why he said, *I will pardon all their iniquities*. He had said before, *I will cleanse them from all iniquity;* then he added, *I will pardon all their iniquities*. For by this change in the number the Prophet shews

the mass and variety of their sins, as though he had said, that the heaps of evils were so multiplied, that there was need of no common mercy in God to receive them into favour.

He says further, *By which they have sinned against me, and by which they have acted wickedly against me.* These words confirm what I have already said, that the Jews were severely reproved by the Prophet, in order that they might first consider and reflect on what they deserved; and secondly, that they might extol the favour of God according to its value.

We must at the same time observe, that the Jews had their attention directed to the first and chief ground of confidence, so that they might have some hope of a restoration; for the origin of all God's blessings, or the fountain from which all good things flow, is the favour of God in being reconciled to us. He may, indeed, supply us bountifully with whatever we may wish, while yet he himself is alienated from us, as we see to be the case with the ungodly, who often abound in all good things; and hence they glory and boast as though they had God as it were, in a manner, bound to them. But whatever God grants and bestows on the ungodly, cannot, properly speaking, be deemed as an evidence of his favour and grace; but he thus renders them more unexcusable, while he treats them so indulgently. There is then no saving good, but what flows from the paternal love of God.

We must now see how God becomes propitious to us. He becomes so, when he imputes not our sins to us. For except pardon goes before, he must necessarily be adverse to us; for as long as he looks on us as we are, he finds in us nothing but what deserves vengeance. We are therefore always accursed before God until he buries our sins. Hence I have said, that the first fountain of all the good things that are to be hoped for, is here briefly made known to the Jews, even the gratuitous favour of God in reconciling them to himself. Let us then learn to direct all our thoughts to God's mercy whenever we seek what seems necessary to us. For if we catch as it were at God's blessings, and do not consider whence they proceed, we shall be caught by a bait: as the fish through their voracity strangle themselves, (for they snatch

at the hook as though it were food;) so also the ungodly, who with avidity seize on God's blessings, and care not that he should be propitious to them; they swallow them as it were to their own ruin. That all things then may turn to our salvation, let us learn to make always a beginning with the paternal love of God, and let us know that the cause of that love is his immeasurable goodness, through which it comes that he reconciles us freely to himself by not imputing to us our sins.

We may also gather another doctrine from this passage,—that if the grievousness of our sins terrifies us, yet all diffidence ought to be overcome, because God does not promise his mercy only to those sinners who have slightly fallen, either through ignorance or error, but even to such as have heaped sins on sins. There is therefore no reason why the greatness of our sins should overwhelm us; but we may ever venture to flee to the hope of pardon, since we see that it is offered indiscriminately to all, even to those who had been extremely wicked before God, and had not only sinned, but had also become in a manner apostates, so that they ceased not in all ways to provoke God's vengeance. It follows,—

9. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity, that I procure unto it.

9. Et erit mihi in nomen, lætitiam (*alii in constructione vertunt*, in nomen lætitiæ) in laudem et in decorem (*vel*, gloriam) apud omnes gentes terræ, quæ audient omnem beneficentiam, quam ego exercuero erga ipsos (quam ego facio ipsis, *ad verbum*,) et pavebunt et contremiscent super omni beneficentia, et super omni pace, quam ego facio illi (*mutat numerum; dixerat*, אותם, *nunc dicit*, עשה לה, *et refertur hoc pronomen ad urbem ipsam.*)

Here God testifies that his favour would be such as to deserve praise in all the world, or, which is the same thing, that his bounty would be worthy of being remembered. Hence he says, that it would be to him for *a name among all nations;* but as he designed to extol the greatness of his glory, he adds, *a praise and an honour*, or a glory; and it is emphatically added, *among all nations.* And this passage shews to us that the Prophet did not speak only of the people's return, and that this prophecy ought not to be con-

fined to the state of the city, such as it was before the coming of Christ; for though the favour of God was known among the Chaldeans and some other nations, it was not yet known through the whole world, for he says, *among all the nations of the earth;* and God no doubt included all parts of the world. We hence then conclude that the favour of which the Prophet speaks refers to the kingdom of Christ, for God did not then attain a name to himself among all nations, but, as it is well known, only in some portions of the east. When, therefore, he says that the favour he would shew to his people, would be to him *a name*, he promises no doubt that deliverance which was at length brought by Christ.

And in the same sense must be taken what follows, *Because they shall hear*, &c.; for the relative אֲשֶׁר, *asher*, is here a causative, as the Prophet expresses here the way and manner in which glory and honour would come to God on account of the deliverance of his people, even because the nations would *hear* of this; and this has been done by the preaching of the Gospel, because then only was God's goodness towards the Jews everywhere made known, when the knowledge of the Law and of prophetic truth came to aliens who had previously heard nothing of the true doctrine of religion. We now then understand the design of the holy Spirit.

Further, by these words God exhorts all to gratitude; for whenever the fountain of God's blessings is pointed out to us, we ought not to be indifferent, but to be stimulated to give thanks to him. When therefore God declares that the redemption of his people would be *a name* to him *among all nations*, he thus shews to the godly that they ought not to be torpid, but to proclaim his goodness. And at the same time it serves for a confirmation, when God intimates that he would be the Redeemer of his people, in order that he might acquire to himself a name, for there is to be understood a contrast, that in this kindness, he would not regard what the Jews deserved, but would seek for a cause in himself, as it is expressed more fully elsewhere, "Not on your account will I do this, O house of Israel," (Ezek. xxxvi. 22;) and the faithful sing in their turn, "Not on our account, O

Lord, but on account of thy name." Ps. lxxix. 9; cxv. 1. We then see that God brings forward his own name, that the Jews might continue to entertain hope, however guilty they may have been, and own themselves worthy of eternal destruction.

If we read, "It shall be to me for a name of joy," the sense would be, "for a name in which I delight." If we read the words apart, "For a name and joy," the sense would be still the same; nor ought it to be deemed unreasonable that God testifies that it would be to him for joy. For though he is not moved and influenced as we are, yet this mode of speaking is elsewhere adopted, as in Ps. civ. 31, "The Lord shall rejoice in his works." God then is said to take delight in doing good, because he is in his nature inclined to goodness and mercy.

He afterwards adds, *they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, &c.* The word כל, *cal*, "all," denotes greatness, and is to be taken emphatically. The words, however, may at first sight appear singular, "they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness," &c.; for it seems not reasonable that men should fear, when they acknowledge God's goodness, for this, on the contrary, is a reason for joy and confidence. This clause is sometimes applied to the ungodly, for they have no taste for God's favour so as to be cheered by it, but on the contrary they fret and gnash their teeth when God appears kind to his people; for they are vexed, when they [illegible] from the enjoyment of those bless- [illegible] elsewhere, for them who [illegible] but the Prophet [illegible] when he says, *they shall* [illegible] *goodness, &c.* as though he had [illegible] would be known among [illegible] that he had been [illegible] the same time he [illegible] the nations would [illegible] thing to [illegible] the words fear [illegible] to not fread [illegible] themselves to

him whenever he invites them, and in full confidence call on him, there is yet no reason why they should not tremble when they think of his majesty. For these two things are connected together, even the fear and trembling which humble us before God, and the confidence which raises us up so as to dare familiarly to approach him. Here then is pointed out the conversion of the Gentiles; as though the Prophet had said, that the favour of deliverance to the Church would not only avail for this end, to make the Gentiles to proclaim God's goodness, but would also have the effect of bringing them under his authority, that they might reverence and fear him as the only true God. He again adds the word *peace*, but in the same sense as before: he mentions goodness, the cause of prosperity, and then he adds peace or prosperity as its effect. It afterwards follows,—

10. Thus saith the Lord, Again there shall be heard in this place, which ye say *shall be* desolate without man and without beast, *even* in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, *that are* desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,

10. Sic dicit Jehova, Adhuc audietur in loco hoc, de quo vos dicitis, Exterminatus est (*vel*, traditus exitio) ab homine (*hoc est*, ut non supersit homo,) neque supersit jumentum in urbibus Jehudah et in compitis Jerusalem, quæ in solitudinem redacta sunt, ut non sit homo et non sit habitator, et non sit animal (*vel*, jumentum;)

11. The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord *is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: *and* of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord.

11. Vox lætitiæ et vox gaudii, vox sponsi et vox sponsæ, vox dicentium, celebrate Jehovam exercituum, quia bonus Jehova, quia in seculum misericordia (*vel*, clementia) ejus, afferentium laudem (*hoc est*, testimonium gratiarum actionis, *pro sacrificio hic capitur*) in domum Jehovæ, quia reducam captivitatem terræ sicut ab initio, dicit Jehova.

These two verses are connected together, and have been improperly divided, for the sentence is not complete. In the first place we have, *Yet shall be heard*, but what? *the voice of joy*, &c., as we find in the following verse. Jeremiah confirms at large what he had taught respecting the return of the people, because there was need of many and strong supports, that the faithful might proceed in their course with confidence. It was indeed difficult to muster courage under

so great a calamity; and had they for a short season a breathing time, yet new trials constantly arising might have cast them down and laid them prostrate. There is no wonder then that the Prophet here speaks diffusely of that favour which was deemed incredible; and then the memory of it might not have always remained fixed in the hearts of the faithful, had not a repeated confirmation been given.

He again introduces God as the speaker, that the promise might have more effect. *Again*, he says, *shall be heard in this place—even in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem—the voice of joy*, &c. He repeats what we noticed yesterday, that the Jews put every obstacle they could in the way of their restoration. The narrowness of our hearts, we know, does in a manner exclude an entrance as to God's favour; for being filled, nay, swollen with unbelief, we suffer not God's grace to enter into us. So the Jews, by despondingand imagining that their calamity was incurable, and that no remedy was to be expected, rejected as far as they could the promised favour of deliverance. This, then, is what the Prophet again upbraids them with, even that they said that the whole country and all the cities were destroyed, so that neither man nor beast remained. This was, indeed, the fact at that time, and the Jews had spoken correctly; but as it was said yesterday, the ungodly never feel the scourges of God without rushing headlong into despair. Then what is condemned is this, that the Jews thought that they were to perish without any hope of deliverance. Hence the Prophet here reproves their unbelief, and at the same time exhorts them to entertain hope. But he testifies that God's grace would surpass all their wickedness.

Heard then *shall be the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness; the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride;* that is, marriages shall again be celebrated. And this way of speaking often occurs in the Prophets when they refer to the joyful condition of the city and of the people; for in seasons of mourning no one thinks of marrying a wife, so that marriage-feasts then cease as well as all festivals. Then the Prophet briefly shews that God would put an end

to the calamities of the people, and give them reasons for rejoicing after he had for a time punished their sins.

But he shews also of what kind their joy would be, *The voice of them who shall say, Praise ye Jehovah of hosts.* Here he distinguishes between the faithful and the ungodly, for joy is common to both, when prosperity happens to them; for God's children may rejoice when the Lord shews himself to them as a bountiful Father. But the profane exult through intemperate joy, and at the same time they make no mention of God, for they live only on present things; but the faithful raise up their thoughts to God, and never rejoice without thanksgiving. Thus they consecrate and sanctify their joy, when the ungodly, by polluting God's blessing, do also contaminate their joy. We ought then to take special notice of this difference which the Prophet here intimates, between godly and profane joy; for the children of this world do indeed exult, but as we have said, immoderately in their joy; and they are unthankful to God, and never duly reflect on his goodness; nay, they designedly turn away their eyes and their thoughts from God; but the faithful have always a regard to God whenever it succeeds well with them, for they know that everything flows to them from God's goodness only.

Hence he says, Heard shall be the voice of them who shall say, *Praise ye Jehovah, for he is good,* &c. The Prophet here alludes to the customary practice of singing, which is spoken of in sacred history. For we know that when the Temple was dedicated, the praises of God were celebrated, and the Levites always sang, *For his mercy is for ever.* They first exhorted others to praise God, and to every sentence this repetition was added, "For his mercy is for ever." What then had formerly been in common use the Prophet refers to: *Heard* then *shall be* that usual song, *Praise ye Jehovah, for his mercy is for ever.*

He then adds, *Of them who shall bring praise to the house of Jehovah; for I will restore the captivity of the land.* He mentions sacrifices, for the service, according to the Law, required, that these should be added as evidences of gratitude. God indeed had no need of victims, nor did he delight in

external displays; but these exercises of religion were necessary for a rude people, and still learning the elements of truth. The Prophet then speaks here with reference to a particular time, when he connects sacrifices with praises and thanksgiving. He yet shews for what end God required sacrifices to be then offered to him, lest the Jews should think that God was pacified when a calf had been slain. He then shews that all this had been prescribed to them, and enjoined for this end—that they might shew themselves thankful.

This metonymical mode of speaking ought then to be carefully observed; for hence we conclude, that sacrifices of themselves were of no moment, but were only acceptable and of good odour to God on this account—because they were evidences of gratitude.

He then adds, *To the house of Jehovah.* Now, this also ought in the last place to be noticed,—that it is not sufficient for one to be thankful to God, but that public thanksgiving is also required, so that we may mutually stimulate one another. And we also know that confession ought not to be separated from faith; as faith has its seat in the heart, so also outward confession proceeds from it; and therefore it cannot be but that the interior feeling must break out from the soul, and the tongue be connected with the heart. It hence follows, that all those are guilty of falsehood who say that they have faith within, but are at the same time mute, and, as far as they can, unworthily bury the benefits of God. And as I have said, this zeal is required of all the godly, in order that they may stimulate one another to praise God; for it was for this purpose and for this reason, that express mention is made of the Temple; that is, that the faithful might understand, that God is to be worshipped, not only privately and within closed doors, but that also a public profession ought to be made, so that they may together with common consent celebrate and acknowledge his benefits and blessings.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not to separate ourselves often from thee, we may at least know that reconciliation is prepared for us, provided we seek it by a true and sincere faith in

thine only-begotten Son, and so return to thee as really to loathe ourselves on account of our sins, and that relying on thine infinite mercy we may never doubt but that thou wilt be reconciled to us, until having at length finished our present course of life, and being cleansed from all the pollutions of the flesh, we shall be clothed with that celestial glory, which thy Son by his death and resurrection has obtained for us.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Fourth.

12. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down.

13. In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth *them*, saith the Lord.

12. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Adhuc erit in loco hoc destructo, ut non sit homo et jumentum, et in omnibus urbibus ejus, habitaculum pastorum accubare facientium oves:

13. In urbibus montis (*hoc est*, montanis) et in urbibus planiciei (campestribus) et in urbibus Austri (*id est*, quæ vergunt ad meridiem) et in terra Benjamin, et per circuitus Jerusalem, et in urbibus Jehudah, adhuc transibunt oves per manus numerantis, dicit Jehova.

JEREMIAH still pursues the same subject; but he speaks here of the settled happiness of the people, as though he had said, that there was no reason for the Israelites to fear, that God would not open for them a way of return to their own country, and preserve and protect them after their return. But in setting forth their quiet and peaceable condition, he speaks of shepherds; for we know that it is a sure sign of peace, when flocks and herds are led into the fields in security. For enemies always gape after prey, and the experience of wars proves this; for whenever incursions are made by enemies, they send spies that they may know whether there are any shepherds or keepers of cattle; and then they know that there is a prey for them. As then shepherds, when an invasion from enemies is dreaded, dare not go forth, and as there is then no liberty, the Prophet, in order to intimate that the Jews would be in a tranquil state, says, *There shall again be in this place the habitation of shepherds, who will make their sheep,* or their flock, *to lie down.*

We now perceive the design of the Prophet; for one not sufficiently acquainted with Scripture might raise a question, Is this promise to be confined to shepherds and herdsmen? But, as I have already intimated, the answer is obvious,—The promise is general, but expressed in this way,—that God would be the guardian of his people, so that shepherds would drive here and there their flocks, and herdsmen their cattle, in perfect safety, and without any fear of danger.

And in the next verse Jeremiah confirms the same thing, where he mentions, as before, the cities of the mountains, and the cities of the plains, and then the cities of the south, and adds also the *land of Benjamin*, which was a different part of the country, and he mentions generally the *circuits of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah.* What then? *The flocks*, he says, *shall pass under the hands of a numberer.* Here, again, is set forth a greater security, because shepherds would not, as it were, by stealth lead forth their sheep, and afterwards gather them in a hurry, as it is usually done, when there is any fear of danger. *The sheep*, he says, *shall pass under the hands of a numberer.* This could not be the case but in time of perfect peace and quietness; for where there is fear, the shepherds can hardly dare send forth their flocks, and then they dare not number them, but shut them in; and they are also often compelled to drive their flocks into forests and desert places, in order to conceal them. When, therefore, Jeremiah mentions the numbering of them, he intimates that the whole country would be in a state of peace, as in other words, and without a figure, he presently will tell us. But the Prophet in this way exalted the benefits of God, and at the same time strengthened the minds of the weak, for as it has been said, this favour could have hardly been tasted by the Jews while in a state so despairing. The Prophet then made use of a homely and ordinary style when he spoke of flocks and herds. It now follows—

14. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah.

14. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et excitabo (*vel*, stabiliam) sermonem meum bonum, quem locutus sum (*vel*, pronuntiavi) ad domum Israel et ad domum Jehudah.

Jeremiah now shews why God had promised that there would be a quiet *habitation for shepherds*, so that no one would by force take away their flocks. For God declares, that his promise would not be void, as its effects would shortly be evident, even when his mercy was known by the ten tribes and by the kingdom of Judah. Hence he says, *The days shall come;* for it behoved the faithful to look farther than to their present condition. As they were then exposed to slaughter, though the unbelieving still entertained vain hopes, yet the children of God saw thousand deaths; so that it could not be but that terror almost drove them to despair; and in their exile they saw that they were far removed from their own country, without any hope of a return. That the Prophet then might still support these, he bids them to extend their thoughts to a future time; and he had prefixed, as we have before seen, seventy years. It is the same then as though he had said, that the favour of which he predicts could not be laid hold on, except the faithful held their minds in suspense, and patiently waited until the time of the promised deliverance came.

Coming then *are the days, and I will rouse*, or as some render it, "and I will establish;" and both meanings may suit; for קוּם, *kum*, means to rise, but here in an active or transitive sense it means to make to rise. However, its meaning sometimes is to establish, and sometimes to rouse,[1] so as to make that to appear which was before hidden. And this mode of speaking is fitly adopted as to the promises of God; for they seem for a time to lie dormant without any effect, or seem to disappear or vanish away. Hence the stability of the promises then appears, and is seen when God raises them up, they being before hidden and concealed from the faithful. The meaning of the Prophet is, that God would at length render evident the power of his word, by fulfilling it.

But from this manner of speaking, a useful doctrine may be deduced: for we are thus reminded that the promises of God are not always so manifest, that their effect or accom-

[1] So is the *Vulg.*, "suscitabo," "I will awake," or rouse; and also the *Sept.* and the *Targ.*—*Ed.*

plishment is evident to us, but on the contrary they may appear to be dead and void. When it is so, let us learn to exercise faith and patience, so that our souls may not tremble, though God's promises may not every moment manifest their power by being actually fulfilled. In short, the true application of prophetic truth is, that we never lay hold on, and really embrace the promises of God, except we look forward to the *days that are coming*, that is, except we patiently wait for the time prefixed by God: and further, except our faith leans on the promises, when they seem to lie dormant, it is not firm, and has no roots or foundations; for as the root which nourishes the tree is not seen, but lies hid in the earth, and as the foundation of a house is not visible to our eyes, so ought our faith to be in like manner founded, and to drive deep roots into God's promises, so that its firmness may not be in the air, nor have a visible surface, but a hidden foundation. This then is the import and the proper application of this doctrine.

But God calls it his *good word*, because he had promised to be the deliverer of his people. The word of God, when it denounces all kinds of death, and contains nothing but terrors, is always good, if goodness be taken for what is just and right; and hence God, by Ezekiel, reproves the Jews, because his word was bitter to them, and says, "Are the ways of the Lord crooked and thorny? Ye are awry," he says, "and not my word." (Ezek. xviii. 25.) But here the goodness of the word is to be taken for the deliverance of the people; for when God shakes the despisers of his Law with terror, his word is called evil on account of its effect. At the same time, as I have already said, whether God offers to us his favour and mercy, or denounces vengeance on the unbelieving, his word is ever good and right, though it may not be pleasant. This then relates to the apprehensions of men when he says, *I will rouse*, or establish, *my good word*.

He afterwards adds, *which I have spoken;* by which clause he confirms the doctrine of Jeremiah, for he shews that he was its author, and that Jeremiah brought nothing from himself, but faithfully testified of his mercy and of the liberation of the people according to the commission he had

received. We are at the same time reminded, that we are not presumptuously to hope for anything, except God has spoken. Let us then learn to embrace his promises, so that none of us may look for this or that, but know that then only he will be propitious to us, when we lean on his word. He afterwards speaks of the kingdom of Israel, and of the kingdom of Judah, to intimate that he would be merciful to the whole people, though the ten tribes had been for a long time separated from the tribe of Judah, and from the half tribe of Benjamin, as it has been stated elsewhere. It follows—

15. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

15. Diebus illis et tempore illo germinare faciam Davidi germen justitiæ; et faciet judicium et justitiam in terra.

Here the Prophet shews what Paul afterwards has spoken of, that all the promises of God are in Christ yea and amen, (2 Cor. i. 20;) that is, that they do not stand nor can be valid as to us, except Christ interposes to sanction or confirm them. Then the efficacy of God's promises depends on Christ alone. And hence the Prophets, when speaking of the grace of God, come at length to Christ, for without him all the promises would vanish away. Let us also know that the Jews had been so trained as ever to flee to God's covenant; for on the general covenant depended all particular promises. As, for instance, Jeremiah has hitherto been often prophesying of God's mercy to the people, after having punished them for their sins; now this promise was special. How then could the Jews and the Israelites believe that they should return to their own country? This special promise could have been of no moment, except as it was an appendix of the covenant, even because God had adopted them as his people. As then the Jews knew that they had been chosen as a peculiar people, and that God was their Father, hence their faith in all the promises. Now, again, we must bear in mind, that the covenant was founded on Christ alone; for God had not only promised to Abraham that he would be a Father to his seed, but had also added an earnest or a pledge that a Redeemer would come.

We now then perceive the reason why the Prophets, when they sought to strengthen the faithful in the hope of salvation, set forth Christ, because the promises had no certainty without the general covenant. And further, as the general covenant could not stand, nor have any validity, except in Christ, this is the point to which Jeremiah now turns his attention, as we have also seen in other places, especially in the twenty-third chapter, from which he repeats this prophecy. God then had promised that his people would be restored; he had also promised that he would be so propitious to them as to preserve them in safety as his people: he now adds—

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and real happiness, such as had been promised at the coming of Christ, lest they should think that what all God's servants had promised was then accomplished: for we know how disposed men are to be satisfied with earthly things. The Jews might then have thought that their happiness was completed, had not God exercised them with many troubles, in order that they might ever look forward to the manifestation of Christ.

He calls it *the Branch of righteousness*, by way of contrast, because the children of David had become degenerated; and God had almost deemed them accursed, for the greatest part of the kings were destitute of God's grace. There was, then, but one Branch of righteousness, even Christ. We further know how wide and extensive is Christ's righteousness, for he communicates it to us. But we ought to begin with that righteousness which I have mentioned, that is, what is in opposition to the many changes which happened to the posterity of David, for things often were in a very low state. Though *unto David*, לדוד, *Ladavid*, is often taken as meaning, "I will raise up the branch of David," yet God seems here to refer to the promise which he had made to David, as God is said in many passages to have sworn to his servant David. (Ps. lxxxix. 3; cxxxii. 11.)

It follows, *And he shall execute judgment and justice in the land.* By these words a right government is denoted; for when the two words are joined together, justice refers to the defence of the innocent, and judgment to the punishment of iniquity; for except the wicked are restrained by the fear of the law, they would violate all order. Judgment, indeed, when by itself, means the right administration of the law; but as I have already said, justice and judgment include the protection of the good, and also the restraint of the wicked, who become not obedient willingly or of their own accord. In a word, the promise is, that the king here spoken of would be upright and just, so as to be in every way perfect, and exhibit the model of the best of kings.

But we must always observe the contrast between the other descendants of David and Christ. For the Jews had seen the saddest spectacles in the posterity of David: many

thine only-begotten Son, and so return to thee as really to loathe ourselves on account of our sins, and that relying on thine infinite mercy we may never doubt but that thou wilt be reconciled to us, until having at length finished our present course of life, and being cleansed from all the pollutions of the flesh, we shall be clothed with that celestial glory, which thy Son by his death and resurrection has obtained for us.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Fourth.

12. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all the cities thereof, shall be an habitation of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down.

13. In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth *them*, saith the Lord.

12. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Adhuc erit in loco hoc destructo, ut non sit homo et jumentum, et in omnibus urbibus ejus, habitaculum pastorum accubare facientium oves:

13. In urbibus montis (*hoc est*, montanis) et in urbibus planiciei (campestribus) et in urbibus Austri (*id est*, quæ vergunt ad meridiem) et in terra Benjamin, et per circuitus Jerusalem, et in urbibus Jehudah, adhuc transibunt oves per manus numerantis, dicit Jehova.

JEREMIAH still pursues the same subject; but he speaks here of the settled happiness of the people, as though he had said, that there was no reason for the Israelites to fear, that God would not open for them a way of return to their own country, and preserve and protect them after their return. But in setting forth their quiet and peaceable condition, he speaks of shepherds; for we know that it is a sure sign of peace, when flocks and herds are led into the fields in security. For enemies always gape after prey, and the experience of wars proves this; for whenever incursions are made by enemies, they send spies that they may know whether there are any shepherds or keepers of cattle; and then they know that there is a prey for them. As then shepherds, when an invasion from enemies is dreaded, dare not go forth, and as there is then no liberty, the Prophet, in order to intimate that the Jews would be in a tranquil state, says, *There shall again be in this place the habitation of shepherds, who will make their sheep*, or their flock, *to lie down.*

external displays; but these exercises of religion were necessary for a rude people, and still learning the elements of truth. The Prophet then speaks here with reference to a particular time, when he connects sacrifices with praises and thanksgiving. He yet shews for what end God required sacrifices to be then offered to him, lest the Jews should think that God was pacified when a calf had been slain. He then shews that all this had been prescribed to them, and enjoined for this end—that they might shew themselves thankful.

This metonymical mode of speaking ought then to be carefully observed; for hence we conclude, that sacrifices of themselves were of no moment, but were only acceptable and of good odour to God on this account—because they were evidences of gratitude.

He then adds, *To the house of Jehovah.* Now, this also ought in the last place to be noticed,—that it is not sufficient for one to be thankful to God, but that public thanksgiving is also required, so that we may mutually stimulate one another. And we also know that confession ought not to be separated from faith; as faith has its seat in the heart, so also outward confession proceeds from it; and therefore it cannot be but that the interior feeling must break out from the soul, and the tongue be connected with the heart. It hence follows, that all those are guilty of falsehood who say that they have faith within, but are at the same time mute, and, as far as they can, unworthily bury the benefits of God. And as I have said, this zeal is required of all the godly, in order that they may stimulate one another to praise God; for it was for this purpose and for this reason, that express mention is made of the Temple; that is, that the faithful might understand, that God is to be worshipped, not only privately and within closed doors, but that also a public profession ought to be made, so that they may together with common consent celebrate and acknowledge his benefits and blessings.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not to separate ourselves often from thee, we may at least know that reconciliation is prepared for us, provided we seek it by a true and sincere faith in

thine only-begotten Son, and so return to thee as really to loathe ourselves on account of our sins, and that relying on thine infinite mercy we may never doubt but that thou wilt be reconciled to us, until having at length finished our present course of life, and being cleansed from all the pollutions of the flesh, we shall be clothed with that celestial glory, which thy Son by his death and resurrection has obtained for us.—Amen.

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We now perceive the design of the Prophet; for one not sufficiently acquainted with Scripture might raise a question, Is this promise to be confined to shepherds and herdsmen? But, as I have already intimated, the answer is obvious,—The promise is general, but expressed in this way,—that God would be the guardian of his people, so that shepherds would drive here and there their flocks, and herdsmen their cattle, in perfect safety, and without any fear of danger.

And in the next verse Jeremiah confirms the same thing, where he mentions, as before, the cities of the mountains, and the cities of the plains, and then the cities of the south, and adds also the *land of Benjamin*, which was a different part of the country, and he mentions generally the *circuits of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah*. What then? *The flocks*, he says, *shall pass under the hands of a numberer*. Here, again, is set forth a greater security, because shepherds would not, as it were, by stealth lead forth their sheep, and afterwards gather them in a hurry, as it is usually done, when there is any fear of danger. *The sheep*, he says, *shall pass under the hands of a numberer*. This could not be the case but in time of perfect peace and quietness; for where there is fear, the shepherds can hardly dare send forth their flocks, and then they dare not number them, but shut them in; and they are also often compelled to drive their flocks into forests and desert places, in order to conceal them. When, therefore, Jeremiah mentions the numbering of them, he intimates that the whole country would be in a state of peace, as in other words, and without a figure, he presently will tell us. But the Prophet in this way exalted the benefits of God, and at the same time strengthened the minds of the weak, for as it has been said, this favour could have hardly been tasted by the Jews while in a state so despairing. The Prophet then made use of a homely and ordinary style when he spoke of flocks and herds. It now follows—

14. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah.

14. Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Jehova, et excitabo (*vel*, stabiliam) sermonem meum bonum, quem loquutus sum (*vel*, pronuntiavi) ad domum Israel et ad domum Jehudah.

Jeremiah now shews why God had promised that there would be a quiet *habitation for shepherds*, so that no one would by force take away their flocks. For God declares, that his promise would not be void, as its effects would shortly be evident, even when his mercy was known by the ten tribes and by the kingdom of Judah. Hence he says, *The days shall come;* for it behoved the faithful to look farther than to their present condition. As they were then exposed to slaughter, though the unbelieving still entertained vain hopes, yet the children of God saw thousand deaths; so that it could not be but that terror almost drove them to despair; and in their exile they saw that they were far removed from their own country, without any hope of a return. That the Prophet then might still support these, he bids them to extend their thoughts to a future time; and he had prefixed, as we have before seen, seventy years. It is the same then as though he had said, that the favour of which he predicts could not be laid hold on, except the faithful held their minds in suspense, and patiently waited until the time of the promised deliverance came.

Coming then *are the days, and I will rouse*, or as some render it, "and I will establish;" and both meanings may suit; for קוּם, *kum*, means to rise, but here in an active or transitive sense it means to make to rise. However, its meaning sometimes is to establish, and sometimes to rouse,[1] so as to make that to appear which was before hidden. And this mode of speaking is fitly adopted as to the promises of God; for they seem for a time to lie dormant without any effect, or seem to disappear or vanish away. Hence the stability of the promises then appears, and is seen when God raises them up, they being before hidden and concealed from the faithful. The meaning of the Prophet is, that God would at length render evident the power of his word, by fulfilling it.

But from this manner of speaking, a useful doctrine may be deduced: for we are thus reminded that the promises of God are not always so manifest, that their effect or accom-

[1] So is the *Vulg.*, "suscitabo," "I will awake," or rouse; and also the *Sept.* and the *Targ.*—*Ed.*

plishment is evident to us, but on the contrary they may appear to be dead and void. When it is so, let us learn to exercise faith and patience, so that our souls may not tremble, though God's promises may not every moment manifest their power by being actually fulfilled. In short, the true application of prophetic truth is, that we never lay hold on, and really embrace the promises of God, except we look forward to the *days that are coming*, that is, except we patiently wait for the time prefixed by God: and further, except our faith leans on the promises, when they seem to lie dormant, it is not firm, and has no roots or foundations; for as the root which nourishes the tree is not seen, but lies hid in the earth, and as the foundation of a house is not visible to our eyes, so ought our faith to be in like manner founded, and to drive deep roots into God's promises, so that its firmness may not be in the air, nor have a visible surface, but a hidden foundation. This then is the import and the proper application of this doctrine.

But God calls it his *good word*, because he had promised to be the deliverer of his people. The word of God, when it denounces all kinds of death, and contains nothing but terrors, is always good, if goodness be taken for what is just and right; and hence God, by Ezekiel, reproves the Jews, because his word was bitter to them, and says, "Are the ways of the Lord crooked and thorny? Ye are awry," he says, "and not my word." (Ezek. xviii. 25.) But here the goodness of the word is to be taken for the deliverance of the people; for when God shakes the despisers of his Law with terror, his word is called evil on account of its effect. At the same time, as I have already said, whether God offers to us his favour and mercy, or denounces vengeance on the unbelieving, his word is ever good and right, though it may not be pleasant. This then relates to the apprehensions of men when he says, *I will rouse*, or establish, *my good word*.

He afterwards adds, *which I have spoken;* by which clause he confirms the doctrine of Jeremiah, for he shews that he was its author, and that Jeremiah brought nothing from himself, but faithfully testified of his mercy and of the liberation of the people according to the commission he had

received. We are at the same time reminded, that we are not presumptuously to hope for anything, except God has spoken. Let us then learn to embrace his promises, so that none of us may look for this or that, but know that then only he will be propitious to us, when we lean on his word. He afterwards speaks of the kingdom of Israel, and of the kingdom of Judah, to intimate that he would be merciful to the whole people, though the ten tribes had been for a long time separated from the tribe of Judah, and from the half tribe of Benjamin, as it has been stated elsewhere. It follows—

15. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.	15. Diebus illis et tempore illo germinare faciam Davidi germen justitiæ; et faciet judicium et justitiam in terra.

Here the Prophet shews what Paul afterwards has spoken of, that all the promises of God are in Christ yea and amen, (2 Cor. i. 20;) that is, that they do not stand nor can be valid as to us, except Christ interposes to sanction or confirm them. Then the efficacy of God's promises depends on Christ alone. And hence the Prophets, when speaking of the grace of God, come at length to Christ, for without him all the promises would vanish away. Let us also know that the Jews had been so trained as ever to flee to God's covenant; for on the general covenant depended all particular promises. As, for instance, Jeremiah has hitherto been often prophesying of God's mercy to the people, after having punished them for their sins; now this promise was special. How then could the Jews and the Israelites believe that they should return to their own country? This special promise could have been of no moment, except as it was an appendix of the covenant, even because God had adopted them as his people. As then the Jews knew that they had been chosen as a peculiar people, and that God was their Father, hence their faith in all the promises. Now, again, we must bear in mind, that the covenant was founded on Christ alone; for God had not only promised to Abraham that he would be a Father to his seed, but had also added an earnest or a pledge that a Redeemer would come.

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and real happiness, such as had been promised at the coming of Christ, lest they should think that what all God's servants had promised was then accomplished: for we know how disposed men are to be satisfied with earthly things. The Jews might then have thought that their happiness was completed, had not God exercised them with many troubles, in order that they might ever look forward to the manifestation of Christ.

He calls it *the Branch of righteousness*, by way of contrast, because the children of David had become degenerated; and God had almost deemed them accursed, for the greatest part of the kings were destitute of God's grace. There was, then, but one Branch of righteousness, even Christ. We further know how wide and extensive is Christ's righteousness, for he communicates it to us. But we ought to begin with that righteousness which I have mentioned, that is, what is in opposition to the many changes which happened to the posterity of David, for things often were in a very low state. Though *unto David*, לדוד, *Ladavid*, is often taken as meaning, "I will raise up the branch of David," yet God seems here to refer to the promise which he had made to David, as God is said in many passages to have sworn to his servant David. (Ps. lxxxix. 3; cxxxii. 11.)

It follows, *And he shall execute judgment and justice in the land.* By these words a right government is denoted; for when the two words are joined together, justice refers to the defence of the innocent, and judgment to the punishment of iniquity; for except the wicked are restrained by the fear of the law, they would violate all order. Judgment, indeed, when by itself, means the right administration of the law; but as I have already said, justice and judgment include the protection of the good, and also the restraint of the wicked, who become not obedient willingly or of their own accord. In a word, the promise is, that the king here spoken of would be upright and just, so as to be in every way perfect, and exhibit the model of the best of kings.

But we must always observe the contrast between the other descendants of David and Christ. For the Jews had seen the saddest spectacles in the posterity of David: many

of them were apostates, and perverted the worship of God; others raged against the Prophets and all good men, and were also full of avarice and rapacity, and given to all kinds of lusts. Since, then, their kings had debased themselves with so many crimes, there is here promised a king who would so discharge his office as to be owned as the true minister of God.

It is, at the same time, necessary to bear in mind the character of Christ's kingdom. It is, we know, spiritual; but it is set forth under the image or form of an earthly and civil government; for whenever the Prophets speak of Christ's kingdom, they set before us an earthly form, because spiritual truth, without any metaphor, could not have been sufficiently understood by a rude people in their childhood. There is no wonder, then, that the Prophets, wishing to accommodate their words to the capacity of the Jews, should so speak of Christ's kingdom as to portray it before them as an earthly and civil government. But it is necessary for us to consider what sort of kingdom it is. As, then, it is spiritual, the justice and judgment of which the Prophet speaks, do not belong only to civil and external order, but rather to that rectitude by which it comes that men are reformed according to God's image, which is in righteousness and truth. Christ then is said to reign over us in justice and judgment, not only because he keeps us by laws within the range of our duty, and defends the good and the innocent, and represses the audacity of the wicked; but because he rules us by his Spirit. And of the Spirit we know what Christ himself declares, "The Spirit shall convince the world of righteousness and judgment," &c. (John xvi. 8.) Hence we must come to spiritual jurisdiction, if we wish to understand what that righteousness is which is here mentioned: of the same kind also is the judgment that is added. It afterwards follows,—

16. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.

16. Diebus illis salvabitur Judah, et Jerusalem habitabitur confidenter; et hoc nomen quo vocabit eam, Dominus justitia nostra.

Here the Prophet extends the benefits of the kingdom to

all the Jews, and shews how much was to be expected from that kingdom which he had promised; for in it would be found perfect happiness and safety. Had not this been added, what we have heard of the righteous king would have appeared cold and uninteresting; for it sometimes happens, that however much the king may exercise justice and judgment, yet the people continue still miserable. But the Prophet testifies here that the people would be in every way blessed and happy, when governed by the King promised to come. Hence he says, *In those days Judah shall be saved.* He promises salvation to the Jews, though under that name are included also, as it is often the case, the ten tribes. He adds *Jerusalem*, but in a similar sense, *Jerusalem shall dwell safely*, that is, shall be in a peaceable state. This mode of speaking is taken from Moses; for the Prophets, whenever they spoke of God's blessings, are wont to borrow their doctrine from that fountain. He then says, that the people would be saved, and then that they would be in peace and quietness.

It may now be proper to repeat what I have already touched upon,—that the salvation mentioned here belongs to the kingdom of Christ. Had he been speaking of some earthly or temporal government, the salvation must also have been temporal. But as the spiritual and celestial kingdom of Christ is the object of the promise, the salvation mentioned must reach to the very heavens. Hence its limits are far wider than the whole world. In short, the salvation of which Jeremiah now prophesies, is not to be confined to the boundaries of a fading life, nor is it to be sought in this world, where it has no standing; but if we wish to know what it is, we must learn to raise our thoughts upwards, and above the world and everything that exists here. It is an eternal salvation. In the meantime, Christ gives us some foretaste of this salvation in this life, according to what is said, "godliness has the promises of the present as well as of the future life." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) But as this promise ought to be applied to the kingdom of Christ, there is no doubt but it is perpetual, and ought to raise up our thoughts to heaven itself.

To salvation is added *safety;* for were the faithful ever to fear and tremble, where would be their salvation? And we know that the happiness brought to us by Christ cannot be otherwise received, except through peace, according to what Scripture so often teaches us: "Having been justified," says Paul, "we have peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.) And then when he speaks in the fourteenth chapter of the same Epistle of the kingdom of God, he says that it consists in joy and peace; and in another place he says, "May the peace of God, which surpasses all conception, obtain the victory in your hearts." (Phil. iv. 7.) Hence these things are connected together, salvation and peace, not that we enjoy this joyful and peaceful state in the world; for they greatly deceive themselves who dream of such a quiet state here, as we have to engage in a perpetual warfare, until God at length gathers us to the fruition of a blessed rest. We must, therefore, contend and fight in this world. Thus the faithful shall ever be exposed to many troubles; and hence Christ reminds his disciples, "In me ye have peace; but in the world"—what? Sorrows and troubles. (John xvi. 33.)

We now, then, see why the Prophet joined safety or security to salvation, even because we cannot otherwise know that we shall be saved, except we be fully persuaded that God so cares for our salvation as to protect us by his power, and that his aid will be always ready whenever needed.

He in the last place adds, *And this is the name by which they shall call her, Jehovah our righteousness.* In chapter xxiii. this name is given to Christ, and to him alone it properly belongs; but it is here transferred to the Church, for whatever belongs to the head, is made common to all the members. For we indeed know that Christ has nothing as his own, for as he is made righteousness, it belongs to us, according to what Paul says, "He is made to us righteousness, and redemption, and sanctification, and wisdom." (1 Cor. i. 30.) As, then, the Father conferred righteousness on his own Son for our sake, it is no wonder that what is in his power is transferred to us. What, then, we found in the twenty-third chapter was rightly declared, for it belongs peculiarly to Christ, that he is God our righteousness. But as we par-

take of this righteousness, when he admits us into a participation of all the blessings by which he is adorned and enriched by the Father, it hence follows, that this also belongs to the whole Church, even that God is its righteousness.[1] Hence it is wisely said by the Prophet, that this would be the name of the whole Church, which could not be, except it had put on Christ, so that God might reign there in righteousness, for the righteousness of Christ extends to all the faithful; and Christ also dwells in them, so that they are not only the temples of Christ, but, as it were, a part of him; and even the Church itself is by Paul called Christ, "As there are," he says, "many members in the human body, so is Christ." (1 Cor. xii. 12.) This cannot be applied to Christ personally, but he thus calls the Church by a metonymy, on account of that participation which I have mentioned.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased to perform to the Jews what thou didst promise, by sending the Saviour, and hast also designed, by pulling down the middle wall of partition, to make us partakers of the same invaluable blessing,—O grant, that we may embrace him with true faith, and constantly abide in him, and so know thee as our Father, that, being renewed by the Spirit of thy Son, we may wholly devote ourselves to thee, and consecrate ourselves to thy service, until at length that which is begun in us be completed, and we be filled with that glory to which thy Son, our Lord, daily invites us.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Fifth.

17. For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;

18. Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

17. Quia sic dicit Jehova, non excidetur Davidi vir qui sedeat super solium domus Israel;

18. Et sacerdotibus Levitis non excidetur vir coram facie mea, qui accendat holocaustum, adoleat oblationem et faciat sacrificium cunctis diebus.

The Prophet had spoken of the restoration of the Church;

[1] See Preface to the third volume. pp. ix-xii.—*Ed.*

he now confirms the same truth, for he promises that the kingdom and the priesthood would be perpetual. The safety of the people, as it is well known, was secured by these two things; for without a king they were like an imperfect or a maimed body, and without a priesthood there was nothing but ruin; for the priest was, as it were, the mediator between God and the people, and the king represented God. We now, then, perceive the object of the Prophet, why he speaks expressly here of the kingdom and the priesthood, for the people could not otherwise have any ground to stand on. He therefore declares that the condition of the people would be safe, because there would always be some of the posterity of David, who would succeed to govern them, and there would always be some of the posterity of Levi, to offer sacrifices.

But this passage ought to be carefully noticed, for we hence gather, that though all other things were given to us according to our wishes, we should yet be ever miserable, except we had Christ as our head, to perform the office of a king and of a priest. This, then, is the only true happiness of the Church, even to be in subjection to Christ, so that he may exercise towards us the two offices described here. Hence also we gather, that these are the two marks of a true Church, by which she is to be distinguished from all conventicles, who falsely profess the name of God, and boast themselves to be Churches. For where the kingdom and priesthood of Christ are found, there, no doubt, is the Church; but where Christ is not owned as a king and a priest, nothing is there but confusion, as under the Papacy; for though they pretend the name of Christ, yet, as they do not submit to his government and laws, nor are satisfied with his priesthood, but have devised for themselves numberless patrons and advocates, it is quite evident that, notwithstanding the great splendour of the Papacy, it is nothing but an abomination before God. Let us, then, learn to begin with the kingdom and the priesthood, when we speak of the state and government of the Church.

Now we know that in David was promised a spiritual kingdom, for what was David but a type of Christ? As God

then gave in David a living image of his only-begotten Son, we ought ever to pass from the temporal kingdom to the eternal, from the visible to the spiritual, from the earthly to the celestial. The same thing ought to be said of the priesthood; for no mortal can reconcile God to men, and make an atonement for sins; and further, the blood of bulls and of goats could not pacify the wrath of God, nor incense, nor the sprinkling of water, nor any of the things which belonged to the ceremonial laws; they could not give the hope of salvation, so as to quiet trembling consciences. It then follows, that that priesthood was shadowy, and that the Levites represented Christ until he came.

But the Prophet here speaks according to the circumstances of his own time, when he says, *Cut off shall not be from David a man*, who may *sit on the throne of the house of Israel;* and then, *cut off shall not be from the priests, the Levites, a man* who may *kindle burnt-offerings, burn an oblation*, &c.[1] Why does he not speak in general of the whole people? Why does he not promise that the twelve tribes would be saved? for this would be a matter of greater moment. But as we have said, we ought to understand this principle, that every kind of blessing is included here, so that men are always in a miserable state unless they are ruled by Christ and have him as their priest.

But it may be asked here, how does this prophecy agree with facts? for from the time Jeremiah promised such a state of things, there has been no successor to David. It is true, indeed, that Zerubbabel was a leader among the people, but he was without a royal title or dignity. There was no throne, no crown, no sceptre, from the time in which the people returned from their Babylonian exile; and yet God testified

[1] It is better to adopt the secondary meaning of the verb, rendered "cut off," as it is done by the *Syr.* and the *Targ.*, which is that of failing or wanting,—

17. For thus saith Jehovah,—
Not wanting to David shall be a man,
Sitting on the throne of the house of Israel;
18. And to the priests, the Levites,
Not wanting shall there be a man before me,
Burning a burnt-offering,
And perfuming an oblation,
And making a sacrifice all the days.—*Ed.*

by the mouth of Jeremiah that there would be those from the posterity of David, who would govern the people in continual succession. He does not say that they would be chiefs or leaders, but he adorns them with a royal title. Some one, he says, will ever remain to occupy the throne. I have said already that there has been no throne. But we must bear in mind what Ezekiel says, that an interruption as to the kingdom is not contrary to this prophecy, as to the perpetuity of the kingdom, or continued succession, (Ezek. xxi. 27;) for he prophesied that the crown would be cast down, until the legitimate successor of David came. It was therefore necessary that the diadem should fall and be cast on the ground, or be transverted, as the Prophet says, until Christ was manifested. As, then, this had been declared, now when our Prophet speaks of kings succeeding David, we must so understand what he says as that that should remain true which has been said of the cast down diadem. God, then, did cast down the diadem until the legitimate successor came. Ezekiel does not only say, "Cast ye it down transverted," but he repeats the words three times, intimating thereby that the interruption would be long. There was, therefore, no cause of stumbling, when there was no kind of government, nor dignity, nor power; for it was necessary to look forward to the king, to whom the diadem, or the royal crown, was to be restored.

We now then see how it was that there have been always those of David's posterity who occupied the throne; though this was hidden, yet it may be gathered from other prophetic testimonies. For Amos, when he speaks of Christ's coming, makes this announcement, "There shall come at that time one who will repair the ruins of the tabernacle of David." (Amos ix. 11.) It was therefore necessary that the kingdom should be, as it were, demolished when Christ appeared. We further know what Isaiah says, "Come forth shall a shoot from the root of Jesse." (Is. xi. 1.) He does not there name David, but a private person, who was content with a humble, retired, and rustic life; for a husbandman and a shepherd, as it is well known, was Jesse the father of David. In short, whenever the Prophets declare that the kingdom

of David would be perpetual, they do not promise that there would be a succession without interruption; but this ought to be referred to that perpetuity which was at length manifested in Christ alone. We have said elsewhere, how the time of return ought to be connected with the coming of Christ. For it is not necessary nor expedient to introduce an anagogical sense, as interpreters are wont to do, by representing the return of the people as symbolical of what was higher, even of the deliverance which was effected by Christ; for it ought to be considered as one and the same favour of God, that is, that he brought back his people from exile, that they might at length enjoy quiet and solid happiness when the kingdom of David should again be established.

As to the priesthood, the same difficulty might be raised, for we know that the priesthood became corrupted; nay, that for the most part the priests not only became degenerate, but altogether sacrilegious. Hence the sacerdotal name itself became nothing else but a base and wicked profanation of all sacred things. But it was God's purpose in this manner to shew that another priest was to be expected, and that men were not to look on figures and types, but were to raise their thoughts higher, even to him who was to be the only true Mediator to reconcile God to men.

By saying, *who may kindle a burnt-offering*, &c., he specifies certain things, or some parts of the priest's office, because the Prophets accommodated their discourses to men of their own age and time, and described the kingdom and priesthood of Christ under those external symbols, which were then in use. It is hence proper to take the ceremonies of the Law as denoting the reality, or what they signified. For Christ offered no calves, nor any incense, but fulfilled all these things which were then set forth to the people under symbols. And he speaks of *burning*, or perfuming the *oblation*, מנחה, *meneche*, for though the oblation remained entire, there was yet a perfuming made by frankincense, and a small portion of the flour was burnt. It is then a mode of speaking, when a part is stated for the whole. It now follows—

19. And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying,

20. Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;

21. *Then* may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

19. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam, dicendo,

20. Sic dicit Jehova, Si irritum feceritis fœdus meum diei et fœdus meum noctis, ut non sint dies et nox suis temporibus;

21. Etiam fœdus meum abolebitur (*hoc est*, irritum fiet) cum Davide servo meo, ut non sit ei filius, qui regnet supra solium ejus et cum Levitis sacerdotibus ministris meis.

He confirms the same thing, but by introducing a similitude; for he shews that God's covenant with the people of Israel would not be less firm than the settled order of nature. Unceasing are the progresses of the sun, moon, and stars; continual is the succession of day and night. This settled state of things is so fixed, that in so great and so multiplied a variety there is no change. We have now rain, then fair weather, and we have various changes in the seasons; but the sun still continues its daily course, the moon is new every month, and the revolving of day and night, which God has appointed, never ceases; and this unbroken order declares, as it is said in Psalm xix., the wonderful wisdom of God. The Prophet then sets before us here the order of nature, and says, that God's covenant with his Church shall be no less fixed and unchangeable than what it is with mankind, with regard to the government of the world.

We now perceive the purpose of the Prophet in saying, *If void ye can make my covenant respecting the day and the night, then abolished shall be my covenant with David and the Levites.* Now he indirectly touches on the wickedness of the people; for the Jews did, as far as they could, overthrow, by their murmurs and complaints, the covenant of God; for in their adversities they instantly entertained the thought and also expressed it, that God had forgotten his covenant. This want of faith then is intimated by the Prophet, as though he had said, "Why are these complaints? It is the same thing as though ye sought to pull down the sun and the moon from the heavens, and to subvert the difference between day and night, and to upset the whole order of nature; for I am the same God, who has settled the succes-

sion of day and night, and has promised that the Church shall continue for ever: ye can, therefore, no more abolish my covenant with David than the general law of nature." We now then understand the Prophet's object: for this was not said without conveying reproof; because they were very wicked and ungrateful to God, when they doubted his truth and constancy, respecting the promise as to the perpetual condition of the Church. He in short intimates that they were carried away, as it were, by a blind madness, when they thus hesitated to believe God's covenant, as though they attempted to subvert the whole world, so that there should be no longer any difference between light and darkness.

Hence he says, *Then shall be abolished my covenant with David my servant, that he should not be my son*, &c. He repeats what he had said, even that it could not be but that the posterity of David should obtain the kingdom, which we know has been fulfilled in Christ. *The throne* of David he now calls what he had named before as the throne of the house of Israel; but he means the same thing. It is called the throne of the house of Israel, because the king and the people are relatively connected, and also because the posterity of David ruled for the public good, not for their own sake.

He adds, *and with the Levites, the priests, my ministers.* He had called David his *servant*, he now calls the Levites his *ministers.* The word שרת, *sheret*, is commonly known, and is used often by Moses, when speaking of the Levitical priesthood. Its meaning is to serve. He adds—

22. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

22. Sicut non numeratur exercitus cœlorum, et non mensuratur (*in futuro tempore pronuntur hæc verba, sed ita resolvi debent, sicuti non potest numerari exercitus cœlorum, et non potest modum habere; מדד significat metiri; mensurare non est Latinum verbum, quanquam cogimur uti;* sicut *ergo* non mensuratur) arena maris; sic multiplicabo semen Davidis servi mei, et Levitarum ministrorum meorum (*non dicit sicuti proximo versu, uno verbo,* משרתי, *sed dicit* מישרתי אותי, *hoc est,* qui ministrant mihi, *sed idem est sensus.*)

There is an omission at the beginning; the particle of comparison is left out, for אשר, *asher*, cannot be taken for

כאשר, *caasher : As the hosts of the heavens cannot be numbered,* nor *the sand of the sea,* so God promises that he would *multiply the seed of David,* and also the *Levites.* This promise, as given to Abraham, referred to the whole body of the people ; for when Abraham was bidden to go out, and to look on the heavens, God made this promise to him, " Number the stars, if thou canst, and the sands of the sea, so shall thy seed be." We hence see that this blessing was extended to the whole seed of Abraham, and especially to the twelve tribes. And now it is confined to the family of David, and to the Levitical tribe.

But what we have already touched upon ought to be borne in mind,—that the safety of the people was grounded on the kingdom and the priesthood. As then kings ruled not for themselves, nor had the sacerdotal dignity been given to the Levites for their own private advantage, but for the sake of the people, so now the Prophet, stating a part for the whole, intimates that the whole people would be secure and safe, when the royal and sacerdotal dignity flourished. There is not, then, anything diminished from God's promise, as though the other tribes were not to multiply ; but what Jeremiah testifies respecting the family of David and the Levitical tribe, is to be extended, without any difference, to the whole Church. It is yet not without reason that an especial mention is made of David and Levi ; for, as it has been said, the Church must have been in a miserable state, without a head, and without a Mediator. There is, however, no doubt but that Jeremiah alluded to that passage which we have already quoted, (Gen. xv. 5 ; Rom. iv. 18 ;) and thus he reproved the want of faith in the people ; for they could not have doubted the restoration of the Church without impugning the truth of God, as though he had given only vain words to Abraham, when he said, " Number the stars of heaven if thou canst, and the sands of the sea, so shall thy seed be." He therefore shews that God would be true and faithful in that promise, so as to multiply his Church like the stars of heaven, and the sands of the sea. It follows—

23. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying,

23. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam, dicendo,

24. Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? Thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them.

24. An non vidisti quomodo populus hic loquantur? Duas familias quas elegit Jehova in ipsis, reprobavit eas (*sed abundat particula* גַּם, *deinde copula etiam supervacua est, nisi vertatur in adverbium temporis, nunc;* nunc *ergo* objecit eas,) et populum meum spreverunt, ut non sit amplius gens in conspectu ipsorum (*hoc est,* ipsorum judicio.)

He now assigns a reason why he had so largely spoken of the deliverance of the people and of their perpetual preservation, even because the blessing promised by God was regarded as uncertain by the unbelieving. Farther, God not only reminds his Prophet why he bade him to repeat so often the same thing, but speaks also for the sake of the people, in order that they might know that this repetition was not in vain, as it was necessary to contend against their perverse wickedness; for they had so filled their minds and hearts with despair, that they rejected all God's promises, and gave no place to faith or hope.

There are some who explain this passage of the Chaldeans, who regarded the people with great contempt. But this explanation is cold and unmeaning. I have no doubt but that God here expostulates with the Israelites, because they relinquished the hope of a deliverance; for Jeremiah would not have spoken thus of the Chaldeans, *Hast thou not seen this people?* He expostulates with Jeremiah, because he had not moved from the city. He then shews, according to what I have already observed, that there was a necessity why he should so often confirm what had been said so plainly before of the return of the people, *Hast thou not seen,* he says, *how this people speak? saying, Jehovah now rejects the two families whom he had chosen,* even the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah.

It was indeed an unhappy event, that the people had been divided into two parts; for they ought to have been one nation. But though it had happened through the defection of the ten tribes that the body of the people had been torn asunder, yet the Prophet, according to the usual way of speaking, says, that the *two families* had been *chosen.* The

election of God was indeed different, even that the seed of Abraham might be one: for as there is but one head, so there ought to be but one body. But God had not wholly cast away the ten tribes, though they had wickedly and impiously revolted from the family of David. He then says, according to the language which prevailed, that the *two families* had been *rejected*, that is, the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah. Now the people said, that both were rejected, which was true, but not in the sense they intended; for as it has been before said, they thought that there was no hope remaining, as though the covenant of God had been wholly abolished, while yet the rejection was only for a time.

We hence see what God reproved in the common language of the people, even because they entertained no hope of mercy and pardon; for being struck with amazement, they had cast aside every thought of God's promises, when they saw that they were to go into exile. For as before they had hardened themselves against threatenings, so now despair immediately laid hold on their minds, so that they could not conceive any idea of God's goodness and mercy. He adds, that *the people were contemptible in their eyes, so as not to be a nation any more.* Thus in the third place he teaches what we have before observed.

25. Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant *be* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;

25. Sic dicit Jehova, Si non fœdus meum diei et noctis, leges cœlorum et terræ non posuero (*repetendum est* DN, *si*, si non posuero leges, *vel, statuta*, cœlorum et terræ:)

26. Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, *so* that I will not take *any* of his seed *to be* rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

26. Etiam semen Jacob et Davidis servi mei reprobabo, ut non assumam ex semine ejus qui dominetur super semine Abrahæ, Isaac et Jacob; quia reducam captivitatem eorum, et miserabor eorum.

Here God opposes the constancy of his faithfulness to their perverse murmurings, of which he had complained; and he again adduces the similitude previously brought forward: "*If*, then, *I have not fixed my covenant*, or if there is no covenant *as to the day and the night,—if there are no laws as to heaven and earth, then I shall now cast away the seed of Jacob and the seed of David:* but if my constancy is

ever conspicuous as to the laws of nature, how is it that ye ascribe not to me my due honour? For I am the same God, who created the heaven and the earth, who fixed all the laws of nature which remain unchangeable, and who also have made a covenant with my Church. If my faithfulness as to the laws of nature changes not, why should it change as to that sacred covenant which I have made with my chosen people?"

We now see the reason why God so often confirmed a thing in itself sufficiently clear, even because the contest with the obstinate hopelessness of the people was difficult. For they thought that they were rejected without any hope of deliverance, when God punished them only for a time for their wickedness, as they deemed their exile to be without a return.

He mentions the *seed of Jacob* first, because it had been said to Abraham, *For thy seed*, and the same promise was repeated to Jacob. (Gen. xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.) He afterwards adds the *seed of David*, because an especial promise was afterwards given to David, (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13:) *Then also the seed of David*, he says, *will I reject, that I should not take of his seed to rule over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:* he now fitly joins together what might have seemed unconnected; for he says, that there would be always some of David's posterity to rule over all the tribes. God, therefore, thus preserved his Church when he set a king over his Church; or a kingdom, as we have said, is inseparable from the safety of the people.

He lastly adds, *For I will restore their captivity.* This obviated the diffidence of the people: for an objection was ready at hand, "What can this mean? for the ten tribes have been already led away into distant regions, and are scattered; a part also of the kingdom of Judah has been cut off; and what remains is not far from entire ruin." Hence God calls their attention to the hope of deliverance, as though he had said, that they were acting foolishly, because they were thus hasty, for their expectation ought to have remained in suspense until the time prescribed, that is, till the end of the seventy years, according to what we have before

seen, when the Prophet spoke against impostors who boasted of a quick return. He therefore tells them that they ought patiently to bear their exile, until the full time of their deliverance came. And he points out the fountain or cause of their deliverance when he says, *I will have mercy on them*, as though he had said, that the very salvation which he promised to the people depended on his gratuitous mercy.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou settest before us daily, both in the heavens and on the earth, an illustrious example, not only of thy power and wisdom, but also of thy goodness and faithfulness, —O grant, that we may learn to raise up our thoughts still higher, even to that hope which is laid up for us in heaven, and that we may so suffer ourselves to be agitated by the various changes of this world, that yet our hope may remain fixed in thee, and that whatever may happen, we may be fully persuaded that thou wilt be in such a way our Father, that we shall at length enjoy that blessed rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Sixth.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1. The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, (when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof,) saying,

2. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him; Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire:

1. Sermo qui fuit ad Jeremiam a Jehova, cum Nebuchadnezer rex Babylonis et totus exercitus ejus et omnia regna terræ, quæ sub dominatione manus ejus erant, et omnes populi pugnarent contra Jerusalem (*hoc est*, oppugnarent Jerosolymam) et cunctas urbes, dicendo,

2. Sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, Vade et dices Zedechiæ regi Jehudah, dices, inquam, illi, Sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego trado urbem hanc in manum regis Babylonis, et incendet eam igni.

It is no wonder, nor ought it to be deemed useless, that the Prophet so often repeats the same things, for we know how great was the hardness of the people with whom he had

to do. Here, then, he tells us that he was sent to King Zedekiah when the city was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar and his whole army. The Prophet mentions the circumstances, by which we may understand how formidable that siege was, for Nebuchadnezzar had not brought a small force, but had armed many and various people. Hence the Prophet here expressly mentions *the kingdoms of the earth and the nations who were under his dominion.*

Zedekiah was then the king at Jerusalem, and there remained two other cities safe, as we shall hereafter see; but it is evident how unequal he must have been to contend with an army so large and powerful. Nebuchadnezzar was a monarch; the kingdom of Israel had been cut off, which far exceeded in number the kingdom of Judah; and he had subdued all the neighbouring nations. Such a siege then ought to have immediately taken away from the Jews every hope of deliverance; and yet the Prophet shews that the king was as yet resolute, and there was still a greater obstinacy among the people. But Zedekiah was not overbearing; we find that he was not so proud and so cruel as tyrants are wont to be: as then he was not of a ferocious disposition, we hence see how great must have been the pride of the whole people, and also their perverseness against God, when they made the king to be so angry with the Prophet. Yet the state of things as described ought to have subdued his passion; for as ungodly men are elevated by prosperity, so they ought to be humbled when oppressed with adversity. The king himself, as well as the people, were reduced to the greatest extremities, and yet they would not be admonished by God's Prophet; and hence it is expressly said in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, that Zedekiah did not regard the word of the Prophet, though he spoke from the mouth of the Lord, by whom he had been sent.

The sum of this prophecy is as follows:—He first says that the *word was given him by Jehovah;* and secondly, he points out the time, for what reason we have already stated. For if he had reproved Zedekiah when there was peace and quietness, and when there was no fear of danger, the king might have been easily excited, as it is usual, against the

Prophet. But when he saw the city surrounded on every side by so large and powerful an army,—when he saw collected so many from the kingdoms of the earth,—so many nations, that he could hardly muster up the thousandth part of the force of his enemies,—that he could not and would not, notwithstanding all this, submit to God and acknowledge his vengeance just,—this was an instance of extreme blindness, and a proof that he was become as it were estranged in mind. But God had thus blinded him, because his purpose was, as it is said elsewhere, to bring an extreme punishment on the people. The blindness, then, and the madness of the king, was an evidence of God's wrath towards the whole people; for Zedekiah might have appeased God if he had repented. It was then God's will that he should have been of an intractable disposition, in order that he might by such perverseness and obstinacy bring on himself utter ruin.

He mentions *Nebuchadnezzar* and *his whole army;* he afterwards describes the army more particularly, *with all the kingdoms under his dominion, and all nations.* When Jerusalem was in this condition, the Prophet was sent to the king. The substance of the message follows, even that the city was doomed to destruction, because God had resolved to deliver it into the hand of the enemy. This was a very sad message to Zedekiah. Hypocrites, we know, seek flatteries in their calamities; while God spares them they will not bear to be reproved, and they reject wise counsels, and even become exasperated when God's Prophets exhort them to repent. But when God begins to smite them, they wish all to partake of their misfortunes; and then also they accuse God's servants of cruelty, as though they insulted their misery by setting their sins before them.

This is what we are taught by daily experience. When any one of the common people, at the time when God does not chasten them either by disease or poverty, or any other adversity, is admonished, the petulant answer is, "What do you mean? in what respect am I worthy of blame? I am conscious of no evil." Thus hypocrites boast as long as God bears with them, and though his kindness spares them. But

when any adversity happens to them, when any one is laid on his bed, when another is bereaved of a son or a wife, or in any way visited with affliction,—if then God's judgment is set before them, they think that a grievous wrong is done to them: "What! have I not evils enough without any addition? I expected comfort from God's servants, but they exaggerate my calamities." In short, hypocrites are never in a fit condition to receive God's reproofs.

There is then no doubt but that Jeremiah knew that his message would be intolerable to King Zedekiah, and to his people. However, he boldly declared, as we shall see, what God had committed to him. And we further perceive how stupid and hardened Zedekiah must have been, for he hesitated not to cast God's Prophet into prison, even at the time when things were come into extremity. It was the same thing as though God with a stretched out arm and a drawn sword had shewn himself to be his enemy; yet he ceased not to manifest his rage against God; and as he could do nothing worse, he cast God's servant into prison; and though he did this, not so much through the impulse of his own mind as that of others, he yet could not have been excused from blame.

Now the Prophet says, *Behold, I will deliver this city into the hand of the king of Babylon.* Had he simply said that the city would in a short time be taken, it would have been a general truth, not effectual but frigid. It was therefore necessary to add this,—that the ruin of the city was a just punishment inflicted by God. And Zedekiah was also thus reminded, that though he were stronger than his enemy, yet he could not effectually resist him, for the war was carried on under the authority of God, as though he had said, "Thou thinkest that thou contendest with men; it would be difficult enough for thee and more than enough, to contend with the eastern monarchy and so many nations and kingdoms; farther than this, God himself is thine enemy; have regard to him, that thou mayest learn to dread his judgment." And that the words might be more forcible, God himself speaks in his own person, *Behold,* he says, *I will deliver this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he*

will burn it with fire. This last sentence was a dreadful aggravation; for it often happens that cities are taken, and the conquerors are satisfied with the spoils. When, therefore, Nebuchadnezzar came against the city of Jerusalem with so much rage that he burnt it, it was a proof of the dreadful vengeance of God. It now follows—

3. And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.

3. Et tu non liberaberis e manu ejus, quia comprehendendo comprehenderis et in manum ejus traderis; et oculi tui videbunt oculos regis Babylonii, et os ejus loquetur ad os tuum (*vel*, cum ore tuo,) et Babylonem migrabis.

As Zedekiah saw the people still doing their duty he despised his enemy; for as the city was very strongly fortified, he hoped to be able to preserve it a little time longer. Hence was the false hope of deliverance; for he thought that the enemy being wearied would return into Chaldea. He was deceived by this expectation. But the Prophet forthwith assailed him, and declared that he would become a captive, which Zedekiah indeed deserved through his ingratitude: for Nebuchadnezzar had put him in the place of his nephew, when Jeconiah was led away into Babylon and had made him king. He afterwards revolted from the king of Babylon, to whom he had pledged his faith, and to whom he became tributary. But the Prophet did not regard these intermediate causes, but the primary cause, the fountain, even because the people had not ceased to add sins to sins, because they had been wholly untameable and had rejected all promises, and had also closed their ears against all wise counsels. Then God, resolving to inflict extreme punishment on a people so perverse and desperate, blinded their king, as we have before said, so that he revolted from the king of Babylon, and thus brought destruction on himself, and the city, and the whole country. Thus God overruled the intermediate causes which are apparent to us; but he had his hidden purpose which he executed through external means.

He then says, *Thou shalt not be freed from his hand, for thou shalt be taken;* and then he adds, *Thou shalt be delivered into his hand.* What he says in many words might have

been expressed in one sentence: but it was necessary to rouse the king's sottishness, by which he was inebriated, so that he might be awakened in order that he might dread the punishment which was at hand, which, however, was not the case; but he was thereby rendered more inexcusable. Thus the threatenings which God repeats by his servants are never useless; for if the ears of those who are reproved are deaf, yet what God declares will be a testimony against them, so that every excuse on the ground of ignorance is removed.

He says afterwards, *Thine eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon.* And this happened; but his eyes were afterwards pulled out. He met, indeed, with singular disgrace, for he was taken to Riblah and tried as a criminal. He was not treated as a king, nor did he retain any of his former dignity; but he was taken before the tribunal of the king of Babylon as a thief or a miscreant. Then after he was convicted of ingratitude and treachery, the Chaldean king ordered his children to be slain before his eyes, and also his chief men and counsellors, and himself to be bound with chains and his eyes to be pulled out; and he brought him to Babylon. It was, then, a most cruel punishment which the king of Babylon inflicted on Zedekiah. And the Prophet seems to have indirectly referred to what happened, *Thine eyes*, he says, *shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon:* he was forced to look with his eyes on the proud conqueror, and then his eyes were pulled out; but he had first seen his own children slain.

He adds, *and his mouth shall speak to thy mouth*, that is, "Thou shalt hear the dreadful sentence pronounced upon thee, after thou shalt be convicted of a capital offence; the king himself shall degrade thee with all possible disgrace." Now, this was a harder fate than if Zedekiah had been secretly put to death. He was dragged into the light; he then underwent many terrible things when led into the presence of his enemy. This, then, the Prophet related, that Zedekiah might understand that he in vain defended the city, for its miserable end was near at hand. He afterwards adds,—

4. Yet hear the word of the Lord, 4. Tamen audi sermonem Jehovæ,

O Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith the Lord of thee, Thou shalt not die by the sword;

5. *But* thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn *odours* for thee; and they will lament thee, *saying,* Ah lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord.

Zedechia rex Jehudah, sic dicit Jehova de te, Non morieris gladio;

5. In pace morieris, et combustionibus patrum tuorum regum superiorum, qui fuerunt ante te, sic comburent te, et, Heus domine, plangent super te, quia sermonem ego locutus sum, dicit Jehova.

Here Jeremiah adds some comfort, even that Zedekiah himself would not be slain by the sword, but that he would die in his bed, and, as they commonly say, yield to his fate. It was indeed some mitigation of punishment, that God extended his life and suffered him not to be immediately smitten with the sword. And yet if we consider all circumstances, it would have been a lighter evil at once to be put to death, than to prolong life on the condition of being doomed to pine away in constant misery. When the eyes are pulled out, we know that the principal part of life is lost. When, therefore, this punishment was inflicted on Zedekiah, was not death desirable? And then he was not only deprived of his royal dignity, but was bereaved also of all his offspring, and was afterwards bound with chains. We hence see that what remained to him was not so much an object of desire, he might have preferred ten times or a hundred times to die. God, however, designed it as a favour, that he was not smitten with the sword.

A question may be here raised, Ought violent death to be so much dreaded? We indeed know that some heathens have wished it. They tell us of Julius Cæsar, that the day before he was killed, he disputed at supper what death was the best, and that he deemed it the easiest death (εὐθανασίαν) when one is suddenly deprived of life,—the very thing which happened to him the day after. Thus he seemed to have gained his wish, for he had said, that it was a happy kind of death to be suddenly extinguished. There is, however, no doubt but that natural death is always more easy to be borne, when other things, as they say, are equal; for the feeling of nature is this, that men always dread a bloody death, and it is regarded a monstrous thing when human

blood is shed ; but when any one dies quietly through disease, as it is a common thing, we do not feel so much horror. Then time is granted to the sick, to think of God's hand, to reflect on the hope of a better life, and also to flee to God's mercy, which cannot be done in a violent death. When, therefore, all these are duly weighed, it ought not to be deemed strange, that God, willing to mitigate the punishment of Zedekiah, should say, *Thou shalt not die by the sword, but thou shalt die in peace.* To die in peace is to die a natural death, when no violence is used, but when God himself calls men, as though he stretched forth his hand to them. It is indeed certain, that it is much better for some to be slain by the sword, than to pine away through disease: for we see that many are either seized with frenzy on their bed, or rage against God, or remain obstinate: there are, in short, dreadful examples, which daily occur, where the Spirit of God does not work nor rule. For there is then no tenderness in man, especially when he has the fear of death ; he then kindles up as it were into rage against God. But, on the other hand, many who are brought into affliction, acknowledge themselves to be justly condemned, and at the same time acknowledge the punishment inflicted to be medicine, in order that they may obtain mercy before God. To many, then, it is better to die a violent death than to die in peace ; but this happens through the fault of men : at the same time, natural death, as I have said, justly deserves to be much preferred to a violent and bloody death, and I have briefly stated the reasons. The subject might indeed be more fully handled, but it is enough to touch shortly on the chief point as the passage requires.

In peace, he says, *shalt thou die*, and then adds, *with the burnings of thy fathers shall they burn thee, and lament over thee, "Alas! Lord."* Here is added another comfort,—that when Zedekiah should die, there would be some to bury him, not only in a humane, but also in an honourable manner. And burial in many places is reckoned as one of God's favours, as in life God shews himself kind and bountiful to us when we are in health and in vigour. For as health and food sufficient for the necessities of life, are evidences of

God's love, so is burial after death ; for burial distinguishes men from brutes. When a wild beast dies, his carcase is left to putrify. Why are men buried, except in hope of the resurrection, as though they were laid up in a safe place till the time of restoration ? Burial, then, as it is a symbol of our immortality, makes a distinction between us and brute animals after death. In death itself there is no difference ; the death of a man and the death of a dog, have no certain marks to distinguish the one from the other. Then it is God's will that there should be some monument, that men might understand how much more excellent is their condition than that of brute animals. Hence then it is, that when God favours us with a burial, he shews his paternal care towards us. On the contrary, when the body of any one is cast away, it is in itself a sign of God's displeasure, as it appeared before, when the Prophet said of Jehoiakim that his burial would be that of an ass, (ch. xxii. 19.) As then Jehoiakim was threatened with the burial of an ass, so now he promises an honourable burial to Zedekiah.

I said that this is true, when the thing is in itself considered. For it sometimes happens that the most wicked are buried with honour and great pomp, when the children of God are either burnt or torn by wild beasts. Known is that complaint of the Psalmist, that the bodies of the saints were cast away and became food to birds and wild beasts. (Psalm lxxix. 2.) And it is said of the rich man, who lived in splendour, that he died and was buried, but there is no mention made of the burial of Lazarus. (Luke xvi. 22.) We ought not then simply to conclude, that those are miserable who are not buried, and that those are blessed who obtain the honour of a burial. As the sun is said to rise on the children of God and on strangers, so also after death, as burial is a temporal benefit, it may be considered as belonging indiscriminately to the good and to the bad. It may on the contrary be, that God should deprive his children of a burial ; yet still that truth remains fixed, that burial in itself is an evidence of God's favour ; and that when any one is cast away and denied a burial, it is a sign of God's displeasure. When yet we come to individuals, the Lord turns a temporal punish-

ment into a benefit to his own people; and makes his temporal blessings to serve for a heavier condemnation to all the reprobate and ungodly. Hence they were barbarous who dared to deride burial, as the Cynics did, who treated burial with contempt. This was inhumanity.

But we ought to hold these points,—that as God supplies us with bread, wine, and water, and other necessaries of life, in order to feed us, and to preserve us in health and vigour, so we ought to regard burial; but when the faithful are exposed to hunger, when they die through cold or nakedness, or when they are made subject to other evils, and when they are treated ignominiously after death, all this turns out for their salvation, for the Lord regards their good even when he seems to afflict them with adversities.

This, then, is the reason why the Prophet now in some measure mitigates the sorrow of Zedekiah, by saying, *They shall bury thee, and with the burnings of thy fathers shall they burn thee.* This was not a common but a royal mode of burial. He then promises, that after many degradations and reproaches, God would at length shew him, when dead, some favour. But one may say, what would this avail Zedekiah? for his body would then be without sense or feeling. But it was well to hear of this kindness of God, for he might thereby conclude that God would be at length merciful to him, if he really humbled himself. There is then no doubt but that a hope of pardon was promised to him, though he was to be sharply and severely chastised even until he died. God then intended that this symbol should ever be remembered by him, that he might not wholly despair. We now then understand why the Prophet promised this to Zedekiah, not that it might be a matter of interest to him to be buried with honour, but that he might have some conception of God's kindness and mercy.

Now we know that the dead bodies of kings were burnt at a great expense; many precious odours were procured, a fire was kindled, and the bodies were seared; not that they were reduced to ashes, (for this was not the custom, as among the Romans and other nations, who burnt the bodies of the dead, and gathered the ashes.) But among the Jews, the body

was never burnt; only they kindled a fire around the dead body, that putrefaction might not take place. The bodies of the dead were dried by a slow fire. This was not indeed commonly done, but only at the burials of kings, as it appears from the case of Asa and of others. (2 Chron. xvi. 14.)

Then he says, *With the burnings of thy fathers* shall they burn thee, and they shall lament *thee*, "*Alas! Lord,*" it may be asked, whether these lamentations were approved by God? To this there is a ready answer,—that the Prophet does not here commend immoderate mourning, and cryings, and ejaculations, when he says, *they shall lament thee*, but that he took the expression from what was commonly done, as though he had said, "They shall perform for thee this office of humanity, such as is usually done over the remains of kings in full power, in the day of their prosperity." God, then, in speaking here of lamentation and mourning, does not commend them as virtues, or as worthy of praise, but refers only to what was then commonly done. But we know what Paul especially teaches us,—that we are so to moderate our sorrow, as not to be like the unbelieving, who have no hope, (1 Thess. iv. 13;) for they think that death is the death of the soul as well as of the body: they therefore lament their dead as for ever lost; and they also murmur against God, and sometimes utter horrid blasphemies. Paul then would have us to be moderate in our sorrow. He does not condemn sorrow altogether, but only requires it to be moderate, so that we may shew what influence the hope of resurrection has over us.

And yet there is no doubt but that men, in this respect, exceed moderation. It has commonly been the case almost in all ages to be ostentatious in mourning for the dead. For not only are they without genuine feeling in lamenting for their friends or relatives, but they are carried away by a sort of ambition, while burying the dead with great noise and lamentation. When they are alone they contain themselves, so that at least they make no noise; but when they go out before others, they break forth into noisy lamentations. It hence appears that, as I have said, mourning is often ostentatious. But as men have from the begin-

ning gone astray in this respect, greater care ought to be taken by us, that each of us may check and restrain himself. Still it is natural, as I have said, to weep for the dead; but doubtless, it may be said, the ejaculations mentioned by the Prophet cannot be approved; for to what purpose was it to cry, "Alas! Lord; our king is dead," and things of the same kind? But we ought to bear in mind, that eastern nations were always excessive in this respect, and we find them to be so at this day. The warmer the climate the more given to gestures and ceremonies the people are. In these cold regions gesticulations and crying out, "Alas! Lord, alas! father," would be deemed impertinent and foolish. But where they tear off their hair, and also cut themselves and tear their cheeks not only with their nails, but also with knives,—where they do these things, they also utter these ejaculations spoken of by the Prophet.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as it is ever expedient for us to be often chastised by thine hand,—O grant, that we may learn to bear thy scourges patiently, and with quiet minds, and so acknowledge our sins, that we may not at the same time doubt but that thou wilt be merciful to us, and that we may with this confidence ever flee to seek pardon, and that it may avail also to increase our repentance, so that we may strive more and more to put off all the vices of the flesh, and to put on the new man, so that thine image may be renewed in us, until we shall at length come to partake of that eternal glory, which thou hast prepared in heaven for us, through Christ thy Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Seventh.

6. Then Jeremiah the Prophet spake all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem,

7. When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.

6. Et loquutus est Jeremias Propheta ad Zedechiam, regem Jehudah, omnes sermones istos in Jerusalem.

7. Et exercitus regis Babylonii pugnabant (*hoc est*, oppugnabant) Jerusalem et omnes urbes Jehudah quæ residuæ erant, nempe Lachis et Azekah, quoniam ipsæ restabant in urbibus Jehudah urbes munitionis (*id est*, munitæ.)

Here Jeremiah only relates that he had delivered the

message committed to him; and here is seen the Prophet's magnanimity, for as it appeared yesterday, he was an unwelcome messenger; and though there was danger, yet Jeremiah performed his office, for he knew that God would not suffer the king to do anything to him unless it were for some benefit. There is then no doubt but that he deposited his life in God's hand, and offered himself, as it were, a sacrifice, when he dared openly to threaten the king, which could not have been done without offending him; and "the wrath of a king," as Solomon says, "is the messenger of death." (Prov. xvi. 14.) Here, then, the firmness of the Prophet is deserving of praise; for he dreaded no danger when he saw that necessity was laid on him by God.

He again repeats that Jerusalem was then surrounded by *the army of the king of Babylon*, as well as the other cities of Judah, which he names, even *Lachish* and *Azekah*. He seems, therefore, indirectly to reprove the arrogance of Zedekiah, for he still retained his high spirits, when yet he was reduced to such straits. All the cities of Judah,—how many were they? Two, says the Prophet. This, then, was no unsuitable way of indirectly exposing to ridicule the vain confidence of the king, who still thought that he could overcome the enemy, though he was master only of three cities, that is, Jerusalem, Lachish, and Azekah. But the Prophet gives a reason why these cities did not immediately fall into the hands of the king of Babylon, because they were *fortified*. It hence follows, that the other cities were taken without trouble, or that they surrendered of their own accord. Zedekiah the king was then deprived of his power, and yet he had not relinquished the ferocity of his mind, nor was he terrified by the threatenings of the Prophet; and this was a proof of extreme madness. For it hence appears that he was alienated in mind; for the dreadful hand of God was put forth against him, and yet he rushed headlong to his own ruin as a wild beast destitute of reason. Let us proceed,—

8. *This is* the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which

8. Sermo qui factus est ad Jeremiam a Jehova, postquam percussit rex Zedechias fœdus cum toto populo, qui erant in Jerusalem, ad pro-

were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them;

9. That every man should let his man-servant, and every man his maid-servant, *being* an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, *to wit*, of a Jew his brother.

10. Now, when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his man-servant, and every one his maid-servant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more; then they obeyed, and let *them* go.

11. But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.

12. Therefore the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

13. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying,

14. At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear.

15. And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name:

16. But ye turned, and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.

mulgandum ipsis (*hoc est*, inter ipsos) libertatem;

9. Ut dimitteret quisque servum suum, et quisque ancillam suam (vir, vir, *ad verbum*, *sed significat* quisque *indefinite*) Hebræum vel Hebræam liberos, ut ne ultra servirent ipsis (*vel*, *transitive*, *ut alii malunt et bene quadrat*, ut non haberent eos servos) inter Judæos vir fratrem suum.

10. Et audierunt omnes principes et totus populus, qui venerant ad fœdus, ut dimitteret servum suum et ancillam suam liberos, ut ne servirent amplius ipsis (*vel*, ut ne dominarentur,) et obedierunt et dimiserunt.

11. Et reversi sunt (*hoc est*, mutarunt concilium) postea, et reduxerunt servos suos et ancillas suas quos dimiserant liberos et subegerunt eos in servos et ancillas.

12. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam a Jehova, dicendo, (*hæc necessario contexere oportet*,)

13. Sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, Ego percussi fœdus cum patribus vestris die quo eduxi ipsos e terra Egypti, e domo servorum, dicendo,

14. A fine septem annorum dimittetis quisque fratrem suum Hebræum, qui venditus tibi fuerit et serviret tibi sex annis, et dimittes liberum abesse tecum (*hoc est*, ut non sit amplius tecum, *vel* apud te) et non audierunt patres vestri me, et non inclinarunt aurem suam.

15. Et conversi estis vos hodie, et fecistis quod rectum erat in oculis meis, promulgando libertatem quisque proximo suo, et pepigistis fœdus coram facie mea in domo super quam invocatum est nomen meum:

16. Et reversi estis (*hoc est*, mutastis consilium) et profanastis nomen meum, et reduxistis quisque servum suum, et quisque ancillam suam, quos dimiseratis liberos animæ suæ, (*hoc est*, ad arbitrium suum,) et subegistis ipsos ut essent vobis in servos et ancillas.

17. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

17. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Vos non audistis ad promulgandum libertatem quisque fratri suo, et quisque proximo suo, ecce ego promulgo contra vos libertatem, dicit Jehova, gladio et pesti et fami, et dabo vos in commotionem (*vel*, concussionem) cunctis regnis terræ.

Though we do not read that what the Prophet relates here was done by God's command, yet we may easily gather that Zedekiah the king had been admonished to liberate the servants according to the Law, as written in Exod. xxi. 2. It was God's will that some difference should be between the people he had adopted and other nations; for God had chosen the seed of Abraham as his peculiar treasure, and other nations were in this respect aliens. It was therefore his will to establish this law among the people of Israel, that servitude should not be perpetual, except one bound himself willingly, of his own accord, through his whole life, according to what we read in Deut. xv. 16, 17; for when one of an ignoble mind deprived himself of the benefit of this law, his master bored his ear with an awl; and having this mark, he could no longer become free, except, perhaps, he lived to the jubilee year. By the words of the Prophet we learn that this command of the Law had been disregarded, for at the end of the seventh year the servants were not made free. Hence the King Zedekiah, having been warned on the subject, called the people together, and by the consent of all, liberty was proclaimed, according to what God had commanded. But this was done in bad faith, for soon after the servants were remanded, and thus treachery was added to cruelty. They had before unjustly oppressed their brethren, but now perjury was heaped on wickedness. We hence see that they not only wronged their own brethren, by imposing on them perpetual servitude, but they also wickedly profaned the sacred name of God, having thus violated a solemn oath.

Now, Jeremiah says that he was *sent* at the time when, by a wicked perjury, the people began to oppress again their servants and their maids. He therefore says, that the word of Jehovah came to him *after the covenant* was made. A

covenant he calls that solemn agreement when God's Law was revived, that servitude should not be perpetual among the people of Israel. And he expresses the same thing when he says, that *a covenant was made with all the people who were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them.* Some take "to them," להם, *laem*, as referring to the servants and maids, but we may take it as meaning *among them*, so that the Law should be in force, not only for the present, but perpetually. Then follows what sort of liberty it was to be, even *that every one should let free his servant, and every one should let free his maid, a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, so that they should not serve.* Some take the verb עבר, *ober*, in an intransitive, and others in a transitive sense, as we say in French, *Qu'ils ne leur fussent plus serfs*, ou, *Qu'ils ne se servissent plus d'eux.* As to the main point there is not much difference. If we take עבר, *ober*, in the sense of *serving*, we must read thus, "That they may not serve," or, "That they may not be their servants." But if we take עבר, *ober*, in the sense of *ruling*, it must be read thus, *That no man*, that is, that no one *may rule over them*, that is, over his Jewish brother, or, *That no man among them should serve*, that is, his Jewish brother.[1]

Here a question arises, Is perpetual servitude so displeasing to God, that it ought not to be deemed lawful? To this the answer is easy,—Abraham and other fathers had servants or slaves according to the common and prevailing custom, and it was not deemed wrong in them. Before the Law was given, there was nothing to forbid one who had servants or maids to exercise power over them through life; and then the Law, mentioned here, was not given indiscriminately and generally, but it was a peculiar privilege in

[1] The *Targ.* and the versions, except the *Sept.*, give the idea of domineering or ruling; and this is the meaning of the verb everywhere when followed by ב,—

To send away, a man his servant, and a man his maid,
The Hebrew and the Hebrewess, free;
So as not to domineer over them,
A man over a Jew his brother.

This is a literal rendering of the verse. But perhaps it would be better to render "servant," bondman; and "maid," bondwoman, as they were the married as well as the unmarried.—*Ed.*

favour of the chosen people. Hence it is without reason that any one infers that it is not lawful to exercise power over servants and maids; for, on the contrary, we may reason thus, That since God permitted the fathers to retain servants and maids, it is a thing lawful; and further, as God permitted the Jews also, under the Law, to bear rule over aliens, and to keep them perpetually as servants, it follows that this cannot be disapproved. And still a clearer evidence may be adduced; for since the Gentiles have been called to the hope of salvation, no change has in this respect been made. For the Apostles did not constrain masters to liberate their servants, but only exhorted them to use kindness towards them, and to treat them humanely as their fellow-servants. (Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1.) If, then, servitude were unlawful, the Apostles would have never tolerated it; but they would have boldly denounced such a profane practice had it been so. Now, as they commanded masters only to be humane towards their servants, and not to treat them violently and reproachfully, it follows that what was not denied was permitted, that is, to retain their own servants. We also see that Paul sent back Onesimus to Philemon. (Ver. 12.) Philemon was not only one of the faithful, but a pastor of the Church. He ought, then, to have been an example to others. His servant had fled away from him; Paul sent him back, and commended him to his master, and besought his master to forgive his theft. We hence see that the thing in itself is not unlawful.

Our servitudes have been abolished, that is, that miserable condition when one had no right of his own, but when the master had power over life and death; that custom has ceased, and the abolition cannot be blamed. Some superstition might have been at the beginning; and I certainly think that the commencement of the change arose from superstition. It is, however, by no means to be wished that there should be slaves among us, as there were formerly among all nations, and as there are now among barbarians. The Spaniards know what servitude is, for they are near neighbours to the Africans and the Turks; and then those they take in war they sell; and as one evil proceeds from

another, so they retain miserable men as slaves throughout life. But as no necessity constrains us, our condition, as I have said, is better, that is, in having hired servants and not slaves; for those called servants at this day are only hired servants.

When heathens commended humanity and kindness towards servants, they said, Let them not be treated as servants, but as those who are hired. So also Cicero said. (Off. i.) He distinguished between servants and such as were hired. He calls the first slaves, that is, those who were under the power of another, and those hired servants who undertook to work for hire, as the case is with us.

But as I have already said, the practice among the chosen people was peculiar. For it was the Lord's will that those whom he had redeemed should remain free and enjoy in this respect the benefits of freedom. That there might then be a memorial of God's favour among the people of Israel, it was the Lord's will that servitude among them should be temporary, even for six years only. And as the law had been disregarded, Zedekiah exhorted the people to set free their servants. But there is no doubt but that God at the same time made it known, that external enemies justly exercised cruelty towards the people, because they themselves shewed no commiseration towards their own brethren. For when they ruled over their servants according to their own wantonness, they in vain complained of the Chaldeans or of the Assyrians, they in vain proclaimed that they were unjustly oppressed, or that the people of God were harassed by the violence of a tyrannical power; for the first originators of cruelty were themselves, and not the Chaldeans or the Assyrians. It was then on this account that Zedekiah was induced to call the people together, and that by a public act all the servants were set free.

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He then adds, *And they afterwards turned*, that is, after they had heard and obeyed. The turning refers to a change of purpose, for they immediately repented of what they had done. They had felt some fear of God, and then equity and kindness prevailed; but they soon turned or changed. The word is taken sometimes in a good, and sometimes in a bad sense. He says that they *turned*, or returned, because they receded or turned back after having commenced a right course. *And they remanded;* there is a correspondence between the verbs וישובו, *ishubu*, they *turned*, and וישיבו, *ishibu*, they *remanded*, or made to return *the servants and maids whom they let go free, and brought them under as servants and maids.* There is no doubt but that the Jews alleged some excuse when they thus remanded their servants, and robbed them of the privilege of freedom: but God designed that they should act in sincerity and without disguise. Whatever, then, subtle men may contrive as an excuse for oppressing the miserable, and however they may disguise things before men, yet God, who requires integrity, does not allow such disguises, for he would have us to deal honestly with our neighbours, for all craftiness is condemned by him.

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that the word of God had been committed to him, but he interposed this narrative, that we might know for what reason God had sent this message to the Jews. For if he had thus begun, "The word came to Jeremiah from Jehovah," and then added, "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, I have made a covenant," &c., the passage would have been more obscure. It was therefore necessary that the narrative should come first, and with this the Prophet's message was connected, even that the Jews had added perjury to cruelty, and thus had committed a heinous iniquity. The Prophet now then comes to close quarters with them, and introduces God as the speaker, *I made a covenant with your fathers the day I brought them up from the land of Egypt, from the house of servants.*

God reminded the Jews of their own law; and though he might have justly required whatever he pleased, yet he proved that the Israelites were bound to him, because he *brought them out of the house of servants.* Who can dare to arrogate to himself dominion over others, who is himself a servant? for there cannot be dominion where there is no liberty. Any one may be free, though without a servant; but no one can be a master except he be free. So God declares that the Israelites were not once free, for they were in a miserable state of servitude, when he stretched out his hand to them. Whence then came liberty to the Israelites? even from the gratuitous mercy of God, who made them free, who brought them forth from tyranny in Egypt. It hence follows, that they could not be masters over others, since they themselves were servants. This is the reason why he says that he *made a covenant the day he brought them up from the house of servants,* as though he had said, that they came forth from their prisons, because he had been pleased to draw them out, not that they might domineer for ever over their brethren, but only for a time. He relates here the law given by Moses in Exod. xxi., as we have stated. *At the end of seven years*[1] *every one shall let free his brother, a*

[1] It is said afterwards that for *six* years was the servitude to be, and yet the statement here is, "at the *end* of seven years." Were it not for two other places, (Deut. xv. 1; xxxi. 10,) where we find the same words, we might follow the *Sept.* and the *Arab.*, and read *six* instead of *seven.* The

Hebrew, who had been sold to him, and him who has served him six years he shall let free from him, that is, that he should not be with him; *but your fathers hearkened not to me, nor inclined their ear.* The Israelites at first, no doubt, submitted to what God had commanded, but shortly after the law was disregarded. When, therefore, he complains here that his voice was not hearkened to, it ought not to be so generally understood, as that the Law had been at all times disregarded; but it is the same as though he had said, "Your fathers formerly were disobedient, because they did not set free their servants within the prescribed time, at the end of the sixth year."

This passage, as many others, clearly shews the great perverseness of the people. Certainly the Law spoken of here ought to have been well approved by the Jews, for they found that they were by a privilege exempted from the common lot of men, and had been preferred before all nations. As, then, they saw that it was a signal evidence of God's bounty towards the seed of Abraham, this ought to have allured them to observe the Law, inasmuch as they found in it what was especially suitable to them; but as every one became addicted to his own private advantage, the poor were oppressed, and a temporary servitude was changed into what was perpetual. There is no wonder then that men soon forgot what was right, though they seemed to have hearkened for a short time to God. It has been the common vice of all ages that the laws of God became soon forgotten and disregarded; so the law of freedom, though especially excellent, became, as we see, neglected.

He adds, *Nor inclined their ear.* We have stated elsewhere that this phrase is emphatic, when added to the expression of not hearkening; for it is a proof of deliberate wickedness, when men close up their ears, and listen not to what is right. It is possible for one to neglect what is said, or not to understand it; but when one intentionally closes his ears, it is a proof of hopeless obstinacy. God, then, is

Rabbins remove the difficulty by saying that the word, קץ, means the commencing, as well as the terminating end or extremity; so the meaning then would be, "at the beginning of seven years;" and this would agree with the *six* years afterwards mentioned. And this is the best explanation of the passage.—*Ed.*

to set free their servants according to what the law prescribed. There would have been no need of such a ceremony, had they observed what they learnt from the Law; but neither they nor their fathers observed the equity prescribed to them by God. Hence there was a necessity for a new promise, sanctioned by sacrifice. The Prophet commended them for obeying God's command. But he now shews, that they were the more inexcusable, because they soon after returned to their old ways. *But ye turned,* he says, that is, they soon repented of the obedience they had promised to render to God. Their promptitude was worthy of praise, when they promised that they would willingly obey; but by doing this in bad faith, they treated God with mockery.

He adds that God's *name* was *polluted.* We hence learn that whenever we misuse God's name, it is a kind of sacrilege; for nothing is deemed more precious by God than truth; yea, as he himself is truth, and is so called, (John xiv. 6,) there is nothing more adverse to his nature than falsehood. It is then an intolerable profanation of God's name whenever it is falsely appealed to; and thus perjury is allied with sacrilege. God's name is indeed polluted in other ways than by perjury, that is, when God's name is taken in vain rashly, thoughtlessly, and without reverence. But the most heinous pollution of it is, when the truth is changed into a lie. This passage then contains a useful doctrine, which teaches us to act faithfully, especially when God's name is interposed.

He afterwards adds, *Ye have remanded every one his servant and every one his maid, whom ye have set free,* &c. The crime was doubled by this circumstance,—that they had emancipated their servants, and then remanded them. For had they not dissembled, their obstinacy could by no means have been tolerated; but their rebellion became still more base, when they had pretended to obey God, and it became shortly known that they had perfidiously promised liberty to their servants. He says that they were *set free to their own soul,* that is, to their own will; for we call men free when it is in their power to choose what they please, for when they are under the power of another, they have no will, no choice

of their own.[1] And indignity is increased, when servants who have been made free are afterwards deprived of so great a privilege; for nothing is more desirable than liberty, as even heathens have declared. He adds that this was done by force, *Ye have made them subject.* The verb כָּבַשׁ, *cabesh*, means to subject and to oppress. The Prophet then shews, that those who had been made free, were not willing to return to their miserable condition, and that they were not constrained to submit to the yoke in any other way than by tyranny.[2] It hence appears that their masters not only employed deceit, but also cruel and tyrannical violence; so that to perjury they added inhumanity, which more increased their crime. It now follows,—

17. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

17. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Vos non audistis me ad promulgandam (*hoc est*, ut promulgaretis) libertatem quisque fratri suo, et quisque proximo suo (*vel*, propinquo, *vel*, sodali suo,) ecce promulgo contra vos libertatem, dicit Jehova, gladio, pesti et fami, et dabo vos in commotionem cunctis regnis terræ (*alii vertunt*, ecce promulgo vobis libertatem ad gladium et ad pestem et ad famem; *quantum ad summam rei pertinet, non multum est discriminis utrumvis legamus, nempe*, promulgo vobis libertatem ad, &c., *vel*, promulgo contra vos libertatem gladio, &c., *ut videbimus.*)

Here the Prophet shews that a just reward was prepared for the Jews, who robbed their brethren of the privilege of freedom, for they also would have in their turn to serve after the Lord had made them free. But he alludes to the way then in use in which they had granted freedom, and says, *Ye have not proclaimed liberty.* They had indeed proclaimed it, as we have seen; but not in sincerity, for they who had been for a short time made free, were soon afterwards constrained to serve. God then makes here no reference to the

[1] Our version, "at their pleasure," is the best, or we may render it, "to themselves," as נַפְשׁ often has this meaning.—*Ed.*

[2] The verb means here evidently to constrain or to force,—

And ye have forced them to be to you
For bondmen and for bondwomen.

It would be better throughout the passage to retain the words bondmen and bondwomen.—*Ed.*

outward act which the Jews had performed, but shews that faithfulness and integrity are so pleasing to him, that he makes no account of what is merely done outwardly. Hence the promulgation of liberty is not before God the verbal one, but that which is carried into effect. With men it is enough to profess a thing, but God regards as nothing all false professions. He therefore complains that the Jews did not obey his word. We have already said that it was not right according to the law to retain servants longer than six years; for in the seventh year the law ordered those who had given themselves up to servitude to be set free. But God restored this law as it were by way of recovery, as it had become almost obsolete. And this is the reason why he says that they *hearkened not.* For he had not only taught by Moses what was right, but had also shewn by Jeremiah that the Jews impiously and wickedly disregarded this humane command. We hence learn what it is to obey God's word, even when we not only embrace what he declares, but also persevere in obedience to him: for it is not enough to exhibit some kind of a right feeling for a short time, except we continue to obey God. The Jews had with their mouth made a profession, and gave some evidence of a disposition to obey; the servants were allowed their liberty; but as the masters shortly after returned to their previous injustice, we see the reason why God says that they had *not hearkened to him.*

It is added, that he would *proclaim liberty to them,* that is, against them. If we read, "Behold, I proclaim liberty to you," then the meaning is, "I will emancipate you," that is, "I shall have nothing more to do with you; go and enjoy your own liberty; but ye shall immediately become a prey to other masters, even to the sword, to the pestilence, and to famine." This meaning is not unsuitable; for it was the happiness of the ancient people alone to be under the protection of God: but when they became disobedient, he dismissed them, and would not have them under his guardianship. But nothing can be more miserable than such emancipation, that is, when God rejects those over whom he had been pleased to rule, and whose patron he had for a time been; for all kinds of evils will soon come upon them,

and God will not interpose his hand. This, then, is the liberty of those who are not willing to bear, as it becomes them, the yoke of obedience to God, even to be exposed to all evils, for it is only by him we can be defended. We hence see that the meaning is very suitable, when we read "Behold, I proclaim to you liberty, but it is to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine."

We may, however, take another view, "Behold, I proclaim liberty for you," that is, against you; for ל, *lamed*, has this sense: "I proclaim liberty against you,"—how? to the sword, &c., that is, "I order the sword to exercise power against you, and I will permit also the same right to the pestilence, and I will permit a like dominion to the famine: the sword, then, and the pestilence, and the famine, shall rule over you, for ye cannot bear my authority." For though the Jews boasted that they were God's chosen people, yet as they were so refractory as to despise the Law and the Prophet, it is quite evident that what they wished was unbridled licentiousness. God then renounces here his own right, and says that it was their fault that they were not free, for he would no more defend them, as an advocate his clients, or as a master his servants. So also it is said in the Psalms, "Behold, our eyes are to God, as the eyes of servants who look to their masters, as the eyes of a maid to her mistress." (Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2.) We indeed know that servants formerly were exposed to all sorts of wrongs; they dared not move a finger, when grievously treated; but if any servant was wronged by another man, his master would undertake his cause and defend him. Then the Psalmist compares the people to servants and slaves, and says that their whole safety depended on the help of God. But God now declares that he will be no longer their guardian; and when he dismissed them, all kinds of evils, as we have said, would come upon them, even the sword, the pestilence, and the famine.

He at length adds, *And I will give you for a commotion to all the kingdoms of the earth.* The words may mean two things. Some take them as though God threatened that they should become unsettled, and vagrants through all the kingdoms of the world; and others, that they would be for

a commotion, for every one either seeing or hearing of their miserable state would tremble. The passage is taken from Deut. xxviii. 25, where we read, "I will give thee for a commotion." The latter meaning is what I mostly approve,—that the Jews would be *for a commotion;* for the vengeance which God would take on them would be so dreadful, that all would be greatly moved or affected, according to what is said by Isaiah, "The commotion shall be for amazement." (Is. xxviii. 19.) We then perceive what the Prophet means,—that God would so severely punish perjury and treachery, that the Jews would become an example to all people; for it would be a sad spectacle for all nations to see the children of Abraham, whom God had adopted, the most miserable of human beings. Their condition, then, would be an object of horror; and this is what the Prophet now declares and threatens. It follows,—

18. And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,

19. The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf;

18. Et dabo viros qui transgressi sunt fœdus meum, qui non stabilierunt sermones fœderis, quod inciderunt coram me, vitulo quem conciderunt in duo, et transierunt inter partes ejus,

19. Principes Jehudah et principes Jerusalem, proceres (eunuchos) et sacerdotes, et totum populum terræ, qui transierunt inter partes vituli.

He pursues the same subject,—that perjury would not be unpunished. But here is described the manner of making an oath, even that they *cut a calf into two parts, and passed between these parts.* Now we know that this was the custom in the time of Abraham, for it is said that he offered a sacrifice to God as a symbol of the covenant, and cut the victim, and passed between the parts. Historians also relate that the Macedonians in mustering an army observed the same ceremony; and it was probably a custom which prevailed among all nations. When the Romans made a covenant, they sacrificed a sow; they did not divide it into parts, but killed it with a stone; and this was the form of execration,—"So may Jupiter smite him who will violate this covenant; if I violate this covenant, may Jupiter thus

smite me, as I now kill this sow." But we see that among the Orientals, the victims were cut in two, and there was another form of execration, even that he might be thus cut asunder, who unjustly and in bad faith violated the given promise or engagement.

It is to this custom the Prophet refers here, and says, *I will give the men who have transgressed my covenant, which they made before me by the calf, which they cut into two parts, and passed between the parts,* &c. But God assigns a reason why he resolved to inflict so dreadful punishment on perjury: he said before, that his name was profaned, and now he adds, that his covenant was violated. He does not speak here of the Law; the covenant of God is called the law for the most part in Scripture; but Jeremiah takes it here in a different sense, even the covenant in which God's name was interposed, or what was sanctioned by an appeal to God, as by way of excellence, marriage is called by Solomon the covenant of God, because it is the principal contract among men. But as the Jews had promised in God's presence that they were ready to obey, when Jeremiah commanded the servants to be made free, and as the agreement was confirmed by a solemn rite, hence the promise given to men is said to be the covenant of God, even on account of the sanction which we have mentioned.

Let us then remember, that whenever we perform not what we have pledged, not only wrong is done to men, but also to God himself, and that it is a sacrilege, and what is much more atrocious than theft, or fraud, or cruelty. Let us, therefore, learn from this passage to act in good faith, especially when the name of God is invoked, when he is appealed to as a witness and judge.

He adds afterwards, that they had *transgressed his covenant;* and he immediately explains himself, *because they have not confirmed the words of the covenant* which *they had made before* him. To confirm or establish the words, was to persevere in what they had promised. For the Jews gave a proof of humanity for a short time; but it was a mere falacious show and pretence. It was for this reason, then, that the Prophet says that they had not *confirmed* or rati-

fied *the words of the covenant which they had made.* Then follows the outward ceremony, the *calf* which they had cut into two parts; and they passed between them, in order that this very passing might produce a deep impression on their hearts, and make them dread the violation of their faith. For we know that external signs are intended for this end,—that men may be kept awake, who would otherwise be tardy and slothful. The same also is the use of sacred symbols, by which God intends to touch and move all our senses. It hence appears how great must have been the insensibility of the people, when they afterwards disregarded that awful protest, for they had *passed between the parts,* and imprecated such a death on themselves if they failed in what they promised. They afterwards hesitated not to violate their promise. We hence see that they were under the power of a diabolical madness, when they disregarded God's judgment.[1]

He adds, *The princes of Judah* and *the princes of Jerusalem,* &c. He does not here name them as though they were different persons, but he speaks by way of amplifying. He then says that he would punish these chief men, lest they should think themselves to be exempted, because they were superior to others in rank and honour; for we know that those who are elevated in the world are so filled with pride, that they deem themselves as free from all laws. This, then, is the reason why God expressly names the *princes* and the *eunuchs.* But he does not mean by the eunuchs those who had been emasculated, as we have stated already in several places. The chief men were called by this name, סרסים, *serasim.*[2]

[1] The construction of this verse as to "the calf," is various. Our version is that of *Junius* and *Tremelius.* It is difficult to understand the *Sept.*, the *Targ.*, and the *Vulg.* The *Syr.* is substantially as follows,—

18. And I will make the men who have transgressed my covenant,
Who have not performed the words of the covenant,
Which they made before me, *like* the calf,
Which they cut in two and passed between its parts,—
19. The princes of Judah, &c. &c.

This is the most literal rendering of the passage: the omission of כ, *like,* or as, is not uncommon.—*Ed.*

[2] It is rendered "δυνάστας, rulers," by the *Sept.*, "eunuchs," by the *Vulg.* and *Syr.*, and "princes" by the *Targ.* They were the attendants on

He mentions the *princes of Jerusalem*, because they were especially proud, on account of their privileges as citizens; for in Jerusalem was the royal residence and the sanctuary of God. But the Prophet declares that their lot would be nothing better than that of the common people, because God would not suffer his holy name to be a mockery and all equity to be violated, and especially the covenant made in his name to be deemed as nothing, and rendered wholly void. At length he names *the whole people;* whosoever, he says, have passed between the parts of the calf, shall be punished. It follows—

20. I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.

20. Et dabo illos in manum inimicorum ipsorum, et in manum quærentium animam ipsorum: et erit cadaver ipsorum in cibum avi (*hoc est*, avibus) cœlorum, (*est heterosis numeri*,) et bestiæ (*hoc est*, bestiis) terræ.

He confirms and explains what he had before said, and expresses how the punishment would be executed,—that he would *deliver* them *into the hand* of their enemies; and he adds, *who seek their life*, in order to shew that their enemies would not be content with the spoils, or with a moderate punishment, but would be their inveterate enemies, who would not be satisfied until they destroyed them Now this passage teaches us also that the ungodly are God's scourges, for the punishment he resolved to inflict on the transgressors of his law, he executed through them. Though then the Chaldeans had another object than to be God's ministers in punishing the Jews, yet they performed God's work as though they were his hired servants, subject to his own will and pleasure. Nor is there a doubt but that their minds had been greatly exasperated against the Jews, so that they shed blood indiscriminately without mercy: for as God often says, "I will give you favour in the sight of your enemies," (Exod. iii. 21; xi. 3;) so also on the other hand, he declares, that when enemies raged cruelly against them, it was

royalty, not necessarily eunuchs, for Potiphar, who had a wife, was so called. (Gen. xxxix. 7.) They may have acted as judges; and hence perhaps it is, that they are named here with "the priests."—*Ed.*

through his secret influence, he having resolved severely to punish them. This is the reason why he now says, that he would deliver the Jews *into the hand of those who sought their life*, that is, who were not intent on prey or spoils, and would not be satisfied with moderate punishment, but would be implacable enemies, until they destroyed the people.

Another kind of punishment follows, *Their carcases shall be for food to the birds of heaven, and to the beasts of the earth*, as though he had said, that God's vengeance on the Jews would be made evident even after death. We said last week, that it would be no loss to us were we to lie unburied, for burial brings no advantage to us; but yet it is a sign of God's vengeance. As then famine, and nakedness, and cold, and diseases, and other evils, are evidences of God's wrath against men, so also it is when the body of a dead man is cast forth, and is either torn by wild beasts, or eaten by birds. If any one objects and says, that this has sometimes happened to the best and holiest of God's servants; to this we answer, that temporal punishment happens in common to the good and the bad; but when God by famine and want, by diseases also, or by exile, or by prison, or by any other evils, tries and chastises his servants, all this is to them as a help to their salvation. Yet this special mercy of God towards the faithful, which is a peculiar privilege, is no reason why all miseries should in themselves be deemed evidences of God's wrath, for they are everywhere called curses. And we also know that from the same fountain flow all the evils which men suffer in this life, even from God's judgment, who in this manner executes punishment. It is not then without reason that the Prophet here declares, that so severe and dreadful would be God's judgment towards the Jews, that it would extend beyond death itself, for they would become meat to the birds of heaven and to the beasts of the earth. It follows—

21. And Zedekiah king of Judah, and his princes, will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of

21. Et Zedechiam regem Jehudah, et principes ejus dabo in manum inimicorum ipsorum, et in manum quærentium animam eorum, et in manum exercitus regis

Babylon's army, which are gone up from you.

Babylonii, qui ascenderunt è vobis.

He repeats almost the same words, but yet he comes closer to the subject, for he names the enemies of whom he had spoken indefinitely before. He had indeed said that they would be cruel, and would seek their death, and would not be otherwise satisfied. He repeats again the same for the sake of confirmation; but he afterwards adds, that these enemies would be the soldiers of the king of Babylon, even the Chaldeans. He then shews, as by the finger, to the Jews, their calamity, lest they should, as usual, indulge themselves with the hope of security. He does not then declare generally, that they would be punished, and that enemies would come cruelly to destroy them; but he points out the army of the king of Babylon, and says that the Chaldeans would come, being armed by God and fighting under his banner, and would take the city, and destroy the whole kingdom.

But as the Chaldeans had departed, the confidence and the security of the Jews had increased, for they thought that they were now freed from danger. The cause of this departure was, that the Egyptians had gathered an army to help the Jews, or rather to provide by anticipation, for their own safety. There was an alliance, we know, at that time between the Jews and the Egyptians; and the object of both was to fortify themselves against the king of Babylon. The Egyptians had no great care for the Jews, but another reason influenced them; for it was well known, that as soon as the Chaldeans finished the Jewish war, they would make an attack on Egypt. Now they thought that it would be an advantage to them to engage with the Babylonian army in connection with the Jews; for they would have had to fight alone, had Nebuchadnezzar gained the victory; nay, the Jews themselves would have been compelled to assist in subduing Egypt. Hence the Egyptians, having well weighed these things, gathered a large army. The Babylonians, having heard the report, went forth to meet them. Thus the siege of the city was left. The Jews exulted as though they had escaped all danger. Hence the Prophet derides their

folly in thinking that they would now be in peace and quietness, because the Chaldeans *had gone up* from them, because they left for a time the city, and went up towards Egypt. *Though* then, he says, (the particle is to be taken adversatively,) they have *ascended from you*, yet God will deliver you into into their hand.

We now see that Jeremiah spared neither the king nor the princes; and thus we ought to notice the power of the Holy Spirit, which prevailed in the hearts of the Prophets, for they boldly addressed, not only the common people, but also kings and princes. As then we find the Prophet denouncing, with so much courage, the judgment of God on the king and the chief men, let us know, that none are fit to bear rule in the Church, except they be endued with so much firmness as not to fear any, and not to be disheartened by the power of any, so as not to reprove boldly the highest as well as the lowest. It follows—

22. Behold, I will command, saith the Lord, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.

22. Ecce ego præcipio, dicit Jehova, et reducam eos ad urbem hanc, et expugnabunt eam, et capient eam (*vel*, oppugnabunt eam, et capient eam,) et comburent eam igni; et urbes Jehudah ponent vastitatem absque habitatore.

He shews the same thing in other words, but the repetition was not in vain, for what we read here seemed incredible to the Jews. For they raised up their horns when they saw the King Nebuchadnezzar departing from the city. Lest then this vain confidence should deceive them, he again declared to them that God conducted the war, as though he had said, that the Chaldeans had not thoughtlessly taken up arms, but as God had determined, and as he had commanded them. He does not indeed speak of an open command, for it was not the purpose of the Chaldeans to obey God, or to render service to him; but he speaks of his hidden providence. God is said to command, when the ungodly are guided by his secret impulse, for he can turn them as he pleases, according to what is said in other places, "I will hiss for the Egyptians," or for the Assyrians, or for the Chaldeans. The same is the meaning here, when he says, ***Behold,***

I will command, &c. In short, God commands the wicked, he commands diseases, he commands the sword, he commands the famine and the pestilence; and yet there is no reason or understanding in the sword, in the pestilence, or in the famine: but Scripture thus teaches us that all things are under his control, so that nothing can touch us, except as far as God intends by these to chastise or humble us.

And for the same purpose are these words, *Behold, I*, הִנְנִי, *enni*, &c. God shews that he was present, though the Chaldeans were not now seen in the land of Judah. The manner of his presence he sets forth by saying, *I will bring them back to this city, and they shall attack it, and take it, and burn it with fire.* These things have been elsewhere explained, I shall therefore now pass them by.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not continually to provoke thy wrath against us,—O grant, that we, being terrified by thy warnings, may obey thy wise counsels, and that thus by anticipating thy vengeance, which would otherwise remain on us, we may labour to be so reconciled to thee, that we may really find thee to be our Father and the guardian of our salvation, until we shall at length, having finished our course here, come to that blessed rest, which thou hast prepared for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Thirty-Ninth.

We saw in the last Lecture what the Prophet denounced on the Jews,—that as they had acted perfidiously towards their servants, God would punish them by making them servants perpetually. When Nebuchadnezzar went forth to meet the Egyptians, there was some appearance of freedom being granted; for the Jews thought that they were afterwards to be free: but as they had deceived their servants, so the Prophet says, that they were greatly mistaken in thinking that they were to be perpetually free, because Nebuchadnezzar would soon return. So he declares that they were doomed to servitude, so that the liberty in which they gloried would prove illusory. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XXXV.

1. The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

2. Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.

3. Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites;

4. And I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of the princes, which *was* above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door.

5. And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups; and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.

6. But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, *neither* ye, nor your sons for ever:

7. Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have *any:* but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye *be* strangers.

1. Sermo qui factus fuit ad Jeremiam a Jehova diebus Jehoiakim filii Joziæ regis Jehudah, dicendo,

2. Vade ad domum Rechabitarum, et dices illis, (et loquere cum ipsis,) et adducas eos in domum Jehovæ ad unum cubiculorum, et popina illis vinum.

3. Et sumpsi Jaazaniah filium Jeremiæ, filii Habazaniiæ, et fratres ejus, (*hoc est*, cognatos,) et omnes filios ejus, totam domum Rechabitarum;

4. Et adduxi eos in domum Jehovæ ad cubiculum filiorum Chanan filii Igdaliæ, viri Dei, quod erat juxta cubiculum principum, quod erat e super cubiculo Maassaiæ filii Selum custodis thesauri (*alii vertunt*, liminis, *sed sine ratione, ut mihi videtur.*)

5. Et posui in conspectu filiorum domus Rechabitarum (*vel*, coram filiis domus Rechabitarum) scyphos plenos vino, et calices, et dixi, Bibite vinum.

6. Et dixerunt, Non bibimus vinum, quia Jonadab filius Rechab, pater noster (*vel*, patris nostri) præcepit nobis, dicendo, Non bibetis vinum, vos et filii vestri, usque in seculum;

7. Et domos non ædificabitis, et semen non seretis, et vitem non plantabitis, et non erit vobis quicquam, quia (*hoc est*, quin potius) habitabitis in tabernaculis, cunctis diebus vestris, ut vivatis dies multos in superficie terræ in qua vos peregrini estis.

It must be first observed, that the order of time in which the prophecies were written has not been retained. In history the regular succession of days and years ought to be preserved, but in prophetic writings this is not so necessary, as I have already reminded you. The Prophets, after having been preaching, reduced to a summary what they had spoken; a copy of this was usually affixed to the doors of the Temple,

that every one desirous of knowing celestial doctrine might read the copy; and it was afterwards laid up in the archives. From these were formed the books now extant. And what I say may be gathered from certain and known facts. But that we may not now multiply words, this passage shews that the prophecy of Jeremiah inserted here did not follow the last discourse, for he relates what he had been commanded to say and to do in the time of Jehoiakim, that is, fifteen years before the destruction of the city. Hence what I have said is evident, that Jeremiah did not write the book as it exists now, but that his discourses were collected and formed into a volume, without regard to the order of time. The same may be also gathered from the prophecies which we shall hereafter see, from the forty-fifth to the end of the fiftieth chapter.

The power of the kingdom of Judah was not so weakened under King Jehoiakim, but that they were still inflated with pride. As, then, their security kept them from being attentive to the words of the Prophet, it was necessary to set before them a visible sign, in order to make them ashamed. It was, then, God's purpose to shew how inexcusable was their perverseness. This was the design of this prophecy. And the Prophet was expressly commanded to call together the Rechabites, and to offer wine to them, in order that the obstinacy of the people might appear more disgraceful, as they could not be induced to render obedience to God, while the Rechabites were so obedient to their father, a mortal man, and who had been dead for nearly three centuries. The Rechabites derived their origin from Obad and from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. There are those indeed who think that Obad and Jethro were the same; but this conjecture seems not to me probable. However this may be, interpreters think that the Rechabites were the descendants of Obad, who followed Moses and the Israelites. And their opinion seems to be confirmed, because it is said here that they were commanded by Jonadab to live as sojourners in the land. An inheritance was indeed promised them, but as it appears from many parts of Scripture, they were unfaithfully dealt with, for they were scattered here and there

throughout the tribes. They then did not enjoy an inheritance as it was right and as they deserved. And we see also that they lived among other nations.

With regard to *Jonadab*, of whom mention is made, we read in 2 Kings x. 15, that he was a man of great name and influence, for when Jehu began to reign, he had him as his friend, though he was an alien. He must, then, have been in high esteem, and a man of power and wealth among the Israelites. And it is certain that it was the same Jonadab of whom sacred history speaks of there, because he is called the son of Rechab; and yet three hundred years, or nearly so, had elapsed from that time to the reign of Jehoiakim. As to the origin of this family or people, the first was Obad; from him came Rechab, whose son was Jonadab, who lived in the time of King Jehu, and was raised up into his chariot to be, as it were, next to him, when Jehu had not as yet his power firmly established. But they went afterwards to Jerusalem on account of the continual calamities of the land of Israel, for it was exposed to constant plunders, and this we shall hereafter see in the narrative. Then the sons of Rechab did once dwell in the kingdom of Israel; but when various incursions laid waste the land, and final ruin was at hand, having left their tents they went to Jerusalem; for they were not allowed to cultivate either fields or vineyards, as we shall hereafter see. The Rechabites, therefore, dwelt in the city Jerusalem, which protected them from the incursions and violence of enemies; but they still retained their ancient mode of living in abstaining from wine, and in not cultivating either fields or vineyards. They thought it indeed right for them to dwell in buildings, because they could not find a vacant place in the city where they might pitch their tents: but this was done from necessity. In the meantime they obeyed the command of their father Jonadab; and though he had been dead three hundred years, they yet so venerated the memory of their father, that they willingly abstained from wine, and led not only a frugal but an austere life.

The Prophet is now bidden to *bring these to the Temple, and to offer them wine to drink.* I have briefly explained

the design of God in this matter, even that he purposed to lay before the Jews the example of the Rechabites, in order to shame them; for that family obeyed their father after he was dead, but the Jews could not be induced to submit to the command of the living God, who was also the only Father of all. The Prophet then was bidden to bring them to the Temple, and to lay before them cups full of wine, that they might drink. He says that they *refused* to drink, and brought as a reason, that Jonadab their father forbade them to do so. We shall hereafter see how this example was applied; for the whole cannot be explained at the same time.

Let us consider the Prophet's words. He says that the word came to him *in the days of Jehoiakim*, that is, after he had found out by the trial of many years how untameable the Jews were, and how great was their ferocity. Much labour then had the Prophet undertaken, and yet they were not so subdued as to submit to the yoke of God. When, therefore, they had now for many years given many proofs of their obduracy, God summoned the Rechabites as witnesses, who, by their example, proved that the Jews were inexcusable for being so rebellious and disobedient to the commands of the Prophet.

Go, said he, *to the house of Rechab*, (we have said that they dwelt then at Jerusalem, and this will appear hereafter,) *and bring them into the house of Jehovah*. But we must inquire why the Prophet was ordered to lay wine before them in the Temple rather than in a private house. The reason, indeed, is evident; for God's purpose was to shew how wicked and perverse the Jews were, for not even the priests abstained from wine except when they were performing their duties. The Law commanded them to abstain then from wine; but the Levites, who took care of the Temple, and also the priests, when not engaged in the discharge of their office, were fully allowed to drink wine. As, then, the priests were permitted to drink wine even in the Temple, that is, in the chambers adjoining the priests' court, what excuse could have been made when the Rechabites, who were yet of the common people, and even aliens among the Jews, refused wine according to the command of their father Jonadab?

Had God forbidden the whole people the use of wine, the Law might have appeared too rigid; but God not only permitted the people to drink wine, but also the priests; nay, no religious reverence prevented them from drinking wine close to the Temple when they were not engaged in their duties. We now, then, perceive why the place has been mentioned, that is, that the Prophet relates that he brought the Rechabites into the Temple.

Go, then, and *bring them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers, and offer them wine to drink.* We have said that the chambers were nigh the priests' court; for many of the Levites were always keeping watch, guarding the Temple, and also some of the priests. The priests, while serving their turn, alone abstained from wine; but a permission was given by the Law to the Levites to drink wine, and in those very chambers, which were on both sides a sort of appendages to the Temple.

Now the Prophet adds that he *took Jaazaniah*, who was a chief man, and as it were the head of the family. And he names his father, even *Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah;* and he then says, *his whole house.* It is added, that he *brought them into the Temple, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God.* The Prophet no doubt chose a well-known place, that the report of this might spread through the whole city, and even throughout Judea, and also that the dignity of the place might add credit to the report; for we know that when a thing is done in an obscure corner, it may be regarded as doubtful or fabulous. But the Prophet brought the Rechabites into an honourable place, even *into the chamber of the sons of Hanan.* And he afterwards says, that he was *the son of Igdaliah, a man of God.* Doubtless such was the reverence in which this man was held, that no one dared to call into question what had been done there. Then he adds that the *chamber was nigh the chamber of the princes, which was over the chamber of the keeper of the treasury.* Some render the last word, "the entrance,"[1] the word means a vessel; and it signifies here

[1] So the *Sept.*, the *Vulg.*, and the *Syr.*; and the word, סַף, has commonly this meaning, a porch, an entrance or a threshold.—*Ed.*

the sacred furniture ; and there is a change of number, for this word included all the vessels of the Temple. We hence see that the place was select, superior to other places, so that it might be as a notable theatre, and that the prophecy might thus gain more credit among all the Jews.

He says, that he *set wine before them* and requested them to drink when full cups were placed before them. Then he adds that they refused, *We will not drink wine, because Jonadab our father commanded us, saying, Drink ye no wine, nor build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, nor have any such thing as your own.* We see that four things were commanded the Rechabites by their father, to drink no wine, to cultivate no fields, and to plant no vineyards,— these were three ; and the fourth was, not to build houses, but to be content with tents. Here is also added a promise, *that ye may live long in the land where ye are strangers.* Then Jonadab promised to his sons and his posterity a long life, if they obeyed his precepts, that is, to live without wine all their life, and not to possess anything, nor build houses. Their saying that they had obeyed their father's precept, shall be hereafter considered, for we cannot take in everything at once.

But let us now see whether Jonadab did what was right in forbidding his posterity to drink wine and to cultivate land. Agriculture is in itself a mode of living not only honest and innocent, but also remote from ambition, fraud, and plunder : in short, it seems to be of all kinds of living the simplest and the most innocent. Then the advice of Jonadab to keep his sons from agriculture might in this instance be blamed and condemned. But the probability is, that when he saw the Jews and the Israelites despising the Law of their God, he thought of the vengeance, which, though it followed not for a long time, yet ought then to have been dreaded. He also saw the sources of vices, even that the Israelites especially gave themselves up to luxuries, and indulged themselves, as it clearly appears from the Prophets, in all manner of excesses. When, therefore, he saw, on the one hand, the corruptions of the land, and that on the other he dreaded punishment, he wished his posterity to accustom

themselves to an austere mode of living, so that they might more easily move here and there, and also that they might with more tranquil minds endure any adversity that might happen, being neither rich nor used to delicacies. Jonadab then did not condemn agriculture, nor the use of wine, nor commodious habitations, when he commanded his posterity to be contented with tents and water, and wished them to buy wheat and to follow only a pastoral life; but as we have said, he had another object in view. This, then, is what we are, in the first place, to bear in mind.

But we must observe, at the same time, that the posterity of Jonadab did not live on plunder, nor spend their time in idleness; for they were shepherds, who with great labour and many watchings gained their own living. But it was their father Jonadab's wish that they should in a manner be separated from the common affairs of life, on account of the corruptions which prevailed, and which he saw rampant before his eyes; so that he had no doubt as to what was to be, when the Israelites abandoned themselves more and more to all kinds of excesses, and when all integrity was disregarded. This then was the reason why Jonadab restrained his posterity from following the common way of living.

His counsel is, however, not commended, but the obedience which his sons rendered; and this is here proposed as an example, in order to make the Jews ashamed, because they so perversely rejected the Law of God and the doctrine of the Prophets: and it is an argument from the less to the greater; for if the authority of a mortal man prevailed so much with his posterity as to cause them to abstain from wine, and not only to live frugally, but also to endure cold and want and other hard things, how much more it behoved the Jews to do what was right and easy, when God commanded them: This is one thing, even a comparison between God and mortal man. And then there is another,—that this precept continued in force for three hundred years, and kept posterity from neglect; but the Law of God, which continually sounded in the ears of the people, had no power to influence them. Here is another comparison. The third

is, that God acted equitably, and did not press too much on the Jews, so as to make the rigour of the law odious and wearisome: as then God used moderation in his Law, so as to require from the people nothing but what was easy to be borne, he says that Jonadab was rigid and austere, for he forbade the use of wine and did not allow his posterity to cultivate fields, nor to dwell in houses.

This threefold comparison ought then to be borne in mind, and these three parts of the contrast ought to be well considered, even that God had not obtained from his people what Jonadab had from his posterity; and also that God, continually admonishing, prevailed nothing, when a regard for a dead man retained posterity in their duty; and further, that the Law of God, which required nothing but what might be easily done, had been perversely rejected by the Jews, when the Rechabites, in honour to their dead father, suffered themselves to be deprived of all luxuries, and dreaded not an austere, rustic, and, as it were, a savage kind of life; for they not only abstained from wine, but also dared not to shelter themselves from cold by dwelling in houses, and were forbidden all the comforts of life.

Now that the Prophet was ordered to offer them wine, and that they refused, a question here arises, Was their continency in this respect laudable? They seemed thus to prefer Jonadab to God, for they knew that Jeremiah, who offered them wine, was sent by God. But the Rechabites, no doubt, modestly excused themselves, when they said that it was not right for them to drink wine, because they had been forbidden by their father. It was not then their purpose to give more honour to their father than to God or to his Prophet, but they simply answered for the sake of excusing themselves, that they had abstained from wine for three hundred years, that is, that the whole family had done so. This, then, is the solution of the question. But what the Papists do in bringing against us the Rechabites, first to support their tyrannical laws, and secondly, in order to torment miserable consciences at their pleasure, is frivolous in the extreme. As I have already said, the advice of Jonadab is not commended, as though he had rightly forbidden

his sons to drink wine; but only his sons are spoken of as having reverently and humbly obeyed the command of their dead father. Then this passage gives no countenance to the Papists, as though the object of it was to bind the consciences of the faithful to their laws; for what is here spoken of is, that the Rechabites proved by their obedience how base and wicked was the obduracy of the people, as they shewed less reverence and honour to God than these did to a man that was dead.

But the Papists, however, dwell much on another point, —that whatever has been handed down from the fathers ought to be observed; and thus they reason, "The authority of the whole Church is greater than that of a private man; now the Rechabites are commended for having followed the command of a private individual, much more then ought we to obey the laws of the Church." To this I answer, that we ought to obey the fathers and the whole Church: nor have we a controversy with them on this subject; for we do not simply say, that everything which men have delivered to us ought to be rejected; but we deny that we ought to obey the laws of men, when they bind the conscience without any necessity. When, therefore, a religious act is enjoined on us, men arrogate to themselves what is peculiar to God alone; thus the authority of God is violated, when men claim so much for themselves as to bind consciences by their own laws. We must then distinguish between civil laws, such as are introduced to preserve order, or for some other end, and spiritual laws, such as are introduced into God's worship, and by which religion is enjoined, and necessity is laid on consciences.—But I cannot now finish, for I see that the hour has already passed.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased to adopt us for thy children, and also to shew to us what pleases thee, —O grant, that we may in all things be obedient to thee, and never turn aside either to the right hand or to the left; and as thou exhortest us also continually, and stirrest us onward, grant that we may, in quiet meekness of spirit, so surrender our-

selves to be ruled by thee, as to prove ourselves to be thy children, and to glorify thee as our Father, until we shall enjoy that eternal inheritance, which is laid up for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fortieth.

We said in the last Lecture that the example of the Rechabites is brought forward, not for the purpose of commending their obedience, as though it were some great virtue, but only that the Prophet might reprove the Jews for rendering less honour to the living God, than the Rechabites did to their dead father. And, doubtless, this comparison must have exhibited the Jews as acting very disgracefully, for they could not be induced to render obedience, though they had before their eyes the Rechabites as an example. We have also said, that Jonadab did not forbid his posterity to drink wine, to sow fields, and to plant vineyards, in order to set up something new in God's worship; but that he did so, because he deemed it good for his posterity thus to sojourn in the land, so that they might not become attached to their possessions, and that amidst various changes they might be less anxious, and be prepared, as it were, to move elsewhere. We have hence shewn that the Papists ignorantly pervert this passage in order to support their tyrannical laws, in which they pretend to include the spiritual worship of God, and by which they also distress miserable souls; for there is no likeness nor affinity between the command of Jonadab and those laws which are introduced for the purpose of establishing the spiritual worship of God.

For it was not primarily the object of Jonadab's precept to demand from his posterity an abstinence from wine as a necessary thing, but it had a regard to what was quite different. Now, what is commanded for another end, as it is not necessary, so it is not opposed to the word of God; for their liberty of conscience is not taken away: nor was it Jonadab's design to claim for himself the right and authority of God, as though he were a spiritual lawgiver; but his precept only referred to what was civil or social. It hence

appears how unlike was his command to the tyrannical laws by which liberty is destroyed under the Papacy. Were it allowable to speak jocosely, we might say, that it is a wonder that the Papists make so much of this example, which yet none of them follow; for though the monks have among them rigid and severe laws, as to eating and drinking, yet the most holy among them have never observed them; and there has not been a Carthusian or a Celestian, who submitted to the obligation of abstaining from wine. If then this virtue of the Rechabites pleases them so much, why do they not discontinue the use of wine? But this I have not said seriously.

With regard to the subject itself, the solution is certain and easy,—that the Rechabites are not commended as though they had obeyed their father as God, but that they obediently received what their father had commanded them, because it was only a civil precept: he therefore had in view an ulterior object; and he did not require abstinence from wine and other things for its own sake. And Paul, even by one sentence, has settled this controversy; for when he exhorts children to obey their parents, he modifies his exhortation by saying, "In the Lord." (Eph. vi. 1.) We then see that Paul commands children to obey their parents, not in everything, or without limitation, but so that God, who is the Sovereign and the only Father of all, may still retain his authority, and that earthly parents may not claim for themselves so much authority as to ascend the throne of God, as though they were lawgivers to souls. Let us now proceed—

8. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters;

8. Et audivimus in voce (*hoc est*, obedivimus voci) Jonadab, filii Rechab, patris nostri, secundum omnia quæ mandavit nobis, ne biberemus vinum cunctis diebus nostris, nos, uxores nostræ, filii nostri, et filiæ nostræ;

9. Nor to build houses for us to dwell in; neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed:

9. Et ne ædificaremus domos in quibus habitaremus, et ne vitis vel ager vel semen nobis esset (*ad verbum*, et vitis et ager et semen non erunt nobis;)

10. But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done accord-

10. Et habitavimus (quin potius, *est enim copula resolvenda in adver-*

ing to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.

sativam particulam, quin potius habitavimus) in tabernaculis, et obedivimus, et fecimus secundum omnia quæ præcepit nobis Jonadab pater noster.

Jeremiah explains at large what might have been expressed in few words, in order to amplify the constancy of the Rechabites. For one may obey his father, and yet be not so fixed in his purpose, but that he might on some slight occasion fail in his duty. Jeremiah here shews that such was the prompt perseverance of the Rechabites, that they could not be enticed by having wine set before them ; but that as though no temptation had been presented to them, they kept the commandment of their father, who, at the same time, had been dead, as it has already appeared, some ages before.

They then said, that they *hearkened to the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, their father;* and also added, *according to all the things which he has commanded us.* He again relates what Jonadab had commanded, and to this belongs the sentence, *According to all things*, &c. For had he ordered them only to be abstemious, to obey would not have been difficult or hard ; he designed to bind them to a wandering life, that they might be covered only by tents, and that they might not possess anything. As then Jonadab did not in one thing only try the obedience of his family, it appears more clearly how great was their promptitude and perseverance in obeying.

They then said, first, that they were *not to drink wine ;* and also added, *all their days.* We indeed know that the Nazarites were forbidden to drink wine, but it was only for a time, until they had performed their vow ; we also know, that when the priest was discharging his duty, he was not allowed, for that time, to take wine. But afterwards the priests as well as the Nazarites, resumed their common mode of living. But to taste no wine throughout life was a thing far more difficult. The Prophet, no doubt, detailed these particulars, that he might load the Jews with greater disgrace, who, in a matter the most just, and by no means hard, were not, as we shall see, obedient to God. They said, *We, our wives, our sons, our daughters*, as though they had said,

" This precept has ever been observed in our family; and what has been delivered to us, by our fathers, we have followed to this day, as also our fathers, who obeyed the command of a dead man, because his will had been explained to them."

They added, that they were *not to build houses*, literally, to inhabit them, that is, to dwell in them. It was then lawful for the Rechabites to construct houses, that is, to build them for others; but they were to be contented with tents, and to live in them. They might then assist others in building splendid palaces, and thus by their labour gain a livelihood; but they were not allowed to inhabit them, as this was one of their precepts. They farther added, *And a vineyard and a field and a seed we have not.* If we duly consider how hard was their condition, we shall see reason to commend the constancy of the Rechabites, for they were not frightened from their purpose when they saw that they were brought into miserable straits. But, however, we ought especially to attend to the object the Prophet had in view, even to shew how shameful was the perverseness of the Jews, who dared to despise and regard as nothing the precepts of God, when yet the authority of a mortal man, and one that was dead, was so great with his posterity. They then said, that they *dwelt in tents, and did according to all the things which Jonadab their father had commanded them.* It follows—

11. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.

11. Et factum est cum ascendit Nebuchadnezer rex Babylonis in terram, tunc diximus, Venite, ingrediamur Jerusalem a facie exercitus Chaldæorum, et a facie exercitus Assyriorum (*alii vertunt*, Syriæ, *sed* ארם, *quamvis aliquando restringatur ad Syriam, comprehendit tamen Mesopotamiam et alias regiones,*) et habitavimus Jerusalem.

It hence appears that it proved advantageous to the Rechabites to observe what their father had commanded them: for had they been fixed to their possessions, they must have been driven into exile with the rest when the kingdom of Israel was destroyed; what happened to the ten tribes must have happened to the Rechabites. But as they had nothing as their own, they were freer to move elsewhere;

nor had they the trial of leaving possessions, for they had none. We know that many are so tied to their own houses, fields, vineyards, and meadows, that they would rather be killed a hundred times than to be torn away from them. Then Jonadab consulted well the benefit of his posterity, when he ordered them to dwell in tents; for thus they could collect together in one day all that they had, according to the known saying of Bias. Hence poverty was a great advantage to them: their austerity of life was also a benefit to them; they could without difficulty dwell at Jerusalem, for they had no need of many luxuries. Had they been accustomed to wine and to other delicacies, they might have discussed the point, whether it would have been better for them at once to die than to suffer want in a besieged city. Moreover, as they had lived frugally and had also been accustomed to an austere life, no anxiety prevented them to come with confidence to Jerusalem; for they thought that they could gain a sparing and sordid subsistence by their own labour.

It hence then appears what Jonadab had in view, when he forbade his posterity the use of wine as well as the possession of fields and vineyards; for he could then foresee what dreadful revolutions were at hand. It was therefore his purpose thus to train up his posterity, that when difficulties came they might not succumb under the burden, but patiently bear want or any other inconvenience, which to others would be intolerable, whenever their former delicacies came to mind. *We then said, Come, and let us enter into Jerusalem from the face* of both armies. When therefore the Israelites were detained by their fields and domestic possessions, the Rechabites went to Jerusalem, and thus were freed from danger. It now follows,—

12. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying,

13. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord.

14. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed;

12. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam, dicendo,

13. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Vade et dic viro Jehudah et incolis Jerusalem, Annon recipietis disciplinam (*vel*, correctionem) ad obediendum sermonibus meis, dicit Jehova?

14. Stabiliti sunt sermones Jonadab filii Rechab, quos mandavit filiis suis, ne biberent vinum, et non bibe-

for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me.

15. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them*, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.

runt usque ad hunc diem; quia obedierunt mandato patris sui; ego autem loquutus sum ad vos, mane surgens (*vel*, mane surgendo) et loquendo, et non obtemperastis mihi:

15. Et misi ad vos omnes servos meos Prophetas, mane surgendo et mittendo (mane surgens et mittens,) dicendo, Convertimini agedum quisque a via sua mala, et bonas facite actiones vestras, et ne ambuletis post deos alienos ad serviendum ipsis (ut serviatis ipsis,) et habitabitis in terra quam dedi vobis et patribus vestris, et non inclinastis aurem vestram, et non obedivistis mihi.

Here Jeremiah applies the example which he had related; for subjoined is God's complaint,—that he was less regarded by his people than Jonadab was by his posterity. He then says, *Go and speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* To make the reproof the more effectual, the Prophet introduces God as the speaker. It was therefore God's purpose to convey the reproof to the Jews in his own name, and as it were in his own person. *Will ye not receive instruction*, he says, *so as to obey me?* The word מוסר, *musar*, means sometimes ruling or governing, and sometimes correction. But God here no doubt reprehends that madness of the Jews in which they had long hardened themselves, as though he had said, "You never think it right to return to a sound mind." Since, then, they had been for a long time incorrigible and wandered after their own lusts like unbridled wild beasts, a reproof is here given, as though he had said, "Will this people be always ungovernably wanton so as never to submit to the yoke?" And he says, *so as to obey me.* God shews that he required nothing unjust from the Jews, so that a true excuse could be pretended, as though he was too rigid: "I require only," he says, "that ye obey me: this is all my severity, for lovely is the rule of meekness which I use towards you. Since, then, I demand nothing but what children ought willingly to render to their fathers without being admonished, how is it that this moderation is so displeasing to you, and can by no means be approved by you?"

It is then added, *confirmed have been the words of Jonadab* by his children; but my people do not obey me. But as we have said in the last lecture, the Prophet touches particularly on this circumstance,—that the Rechabites obeyed the command of their father in not drinking wine: this was hard; they did *not drink even to that day.* But what did God require from his children? only to receive his Law, and not to go astray, as it is here added, after alien gods. There is, then, a contrast between the hard precept of Jonadab and the equity of the Law; for God required nothing from his people except to render him pure worship. He says, *They have drunk no wine to this day*—and why? because they *obeyed;* that is, there was no scruple of conscience to prevent them, but the authority of a man who was dead so far prevailed with them, that they willingly gave up the use of wine. "As then simple obedience, that is, piety or respect for their father, produced such influence on the Rechabites, how is it that I am not heard? for *I have spoken,*" he says, "so that the sin of the people is not excusable on the ground of ignorance."

Then he adds, *Early rising and speaking.* Here assiduity and diligence are mentioned. Jonadab only once gave his command to his children; that command, which might have been forgotten, remained perpetually in the hearts of his sons, so that they taught the same to his grandsons. But God commanded what was right not only once, but *rose up early,* that is, he sedulously anticipated them; for by this metaphor he intimates that he did not wait until after a continued licentiousness they became more addicted to their vices; for we know that those who have for many years been without restraint, are not easily brought into order, but they become habitually refractory. And hence, also, it comes to be necessary to form those from infancy who are to be ruled by us; for if they be allowed to act as they please, their wantonness cannot afterwards be restrained by any laws. God then says, that he *rose up early,* that is, that he anticipated the Jews, so that together with their milk they might imbibe religion.

He afterwards adds, that he was assiduous in teaching

them, *rising early and speaking.* By *speaking*, he intimates that he had daily repeated the same things, so that forgetfulness might not be pleaded by the Jews as an excuse: *I have spoken to you, rising up early and speaking, and ye obeyed me not.* Then follows an explanation,—that God had sent the Prophets: the Jews would have otherwise been ready to object and say, that God had never appeared to them. Hence he says, that he had spoken to them by his Prophets. *I have sent*, he says, and indeed many—*I have sent all my servants*, &c.; for if Moses only had commanded the Jews what was right, they might have pretended that the Law was buried and forgotten, and that they had no recollection of what Moses had taught. Hence to meet such evasions, he says shortly, that he had *sent all his servants*, that is, that he had sent many Prophets, and so many, that he continually proclaimed in their hearing the doctrine of the Law. He again repeats the words, *rising early and sending*, so that he never ceased to warn and exhort them. Now they who are otherwise tardy and also refractory, yet become gentle when they are recalled to their duty every day and hour. Since God then thus urged them by his Prophets, their mad obstinacy became more evident when they still refused to obey.

Now follows that easy requirement, which still more aggravated their sin, *Turn ye now, every one from his evil way, and make right your doings*, (literally, *make good.*) Here God shews the difference between his Law and the precepts of Jonadab; for he simply required of the Jews what they ought willingly to have done; for had no Law been written, natural light was sufficient to teach the Jews that it was their duty to obey God; for the law of obedience is so written on our hearts, as a testimony, that no one can justly plead ignorance as an excuse. God then here declares that he required nothing but what nature itself dictated, even that the Jews should repent and form their life according to the rule of obedience; though no Prophet were among them, yet every one ought to have been in this respect his own teacher.

It follows, *And walk not after alien gods to serve them.* This admonition still more clearly proves how moderate was

what God required; for he sought nothing more than to retain the Jews under his authority and protection, that he might be a Father to them. Jonadab might have demanded obedience from his posterity, and yet have allowed them the free use of wine, and also the possession of fields and vineyards; but he wished to cut them off as it were from mankind, so that their condition became worse than that of all the nations and people among whom they dwelt; for they became, no doubt, objects of ridicule to their neighbours, endured many reproaches, and were grievously harassed. God shews that he had abstained from exercising rigid authority, and from requiring unbearable servitude, and demanded nothing from his people, but that he might be acknowledged by them as a Father. As, then, he did not tyrannically force the Jews to render him service, and his Law was moderate in its demands, it hence appears still more clear, as I have said, how incorrigible was the wickedness and depravity of that people.

He further adds a promise, which ought by its sweetness to have allured them, so as to become more disposed and prompt to obey. Though he might by authority have commanded, "Turn ye from your superstitions, and faithfully serve me," it would yet have been a command just and equitable; but when he is pleased to add a promise, which ought to have disposed the Jews to obedience, and yet gains nothing from them, their wickedness is rendered again by this circumstance still more detestable. We hence see that there is something important in every clause, and that it is not without meaning that he here adds, *Ye shall dwell in the land which I gave to you and to your fathers.* God here sets forth his own bounty, and then promises a perpetual fruition of it, provided the Jews obeyed. He says that he gave that land to them, and before to their fathers. Had they never partaken of God's bounty, yet the promise alone ought to have induced them to submit to his authority. But God had been already liberal to them. Then experience ought to have convinced them, for they knew that they had obtained the promised land by no other right than by a promise made by God; they knew that the nations,

into whose place they had entered, had been cast out by God's mighty hand. As, then, they had by experience found God to be bountiful, and as he had promised to be in future the same, how great and how monstrous must have been their madness when they would not turn to obedience? Then it is also a circumstance of weighty importance, when God reminded them that it was he who gave the land to them and to their fathers.

He adds, *Ye have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed me.* We have stated elsewhere the import of these words, "Not to incline the ear:" they removed the plea of ignorance or of the want of knowledge. God, then, charges the Jews here with deliberate wickedness; for they had obstinately rejected the doctrine of the Law, and all the warnings given by the Prophets; for when doctrine is set before any people, and God is pleased familiarly to teach them, and nothing is effected, their perverseness is thus more fully made known. God then intimates here that the Jews had not gone astray through ignorance, for they sufficiently understood what was right. Whence, then, was there so great a hardness? even because they had designedly closed their ears, that is, they had wickedly denied obedience to God, and had been refractory, as it were, through a long-cherished resolution, so that they could never be brought to a sound mind. It afterwards follows again,—

16. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me:

16. Quoniam stabilierunt filii Jonadab, filii Rechab, mandatum patris sui, quod mandaverat ipsis, populus autem hic non audierunt ad me, (*hoc est*, non obediverunt mihi.)

The Prophet says nothing new here, but confirms what has been said before; and this he did, that the indignity of the people's conduct might more fully appear, inasmuch as, on one hand, a mortal man, and he now dead, retained authority over his posterity, having once laid on them a restraint in a matter hard and difficult; while God, on the other hand, effected nothing, though he had constantly addressed and exhorted his people, had sent prophets, and ceased not to invite them to himself, and had not only in-

vited them, but also kindly allured them by setting before them his favours, and gave them hope as to the time to come. Since God, then, had tried all means, but without any success, the hopeless depravity of the people became hence evident. This is the import of the whole.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast made known to us by thy servants, not only once, and even often, the way of salvation, but hast sent also thine only-begotten Son to be to us a teacher of perfect wisdom,—O grant, that we may so submit to thee and so consecrate to thee our whole life, that he who died for our salvation and rose again, may peaceably rule us by the doctrine of his gospel; and that we may strive to glorify thee in this world, so that we may at last be made partakers of that celestial glory which the same thy Son our Lord has obtained for us.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-First.

17. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered.

17. Propterea sic dicit Jehova, Deus exercituum, Deus Israel, Ecce ego adducam super Jehudah, et super incolas Jerusalem omne malum quod pronuntiavi contra eos; quia loquutus sum ad eos, et non audierunt; et vocavi eos et non responderunt.

The Prophet, after having shewn that the Jews were so condemned by the example of the Rechabites, that there was no defence for them, now adds,—that as the word of God had been to them useless, it would now be efficacious against them. This is the purport of the verse.

I have spoken to them, says God; I will now speak to them no more, but I will speak against them, that is, I will command the Chaldeans, and they shall be my ministers and the executioners of my vengeance. We hence see the order which the Prophet has observed: he did not bring forward this final sentence, which is like a thunderbolt, until he had proved the Jews guilty. For this purpose was the com-

parison he made, when he said that the Rechabites had obeyed their father, and that the Jews had disregarded God's Law and all the warnings given by the Prophets. *I will bring*, he says, *upon Judah, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil which I have spoken against them; for I have spoken to them, and they heard not.*

Here the Prophet distinguishes between two sorts of speaking. For God had spoken to the Jews, but he had also spoken against them. Here are two prepositions, not very unlike, the one begins with an א, *aleph*, and the other with ע, *oin*. By the one the Prophet denotes doctrine, exhortations, and whatever may lead to repentance, so that men may either be recalled to their duty or retained in it. This, then, is one mode of speaking, that is, when God addresses us and invites us to himself. The other mode is that which refers to threatenings, that is, when God, after having found that he can do nothing by teaching, has recourse to threatenings, and shews what vengeance awaits us. This passage, then, is especially worthy of observation, because we hence learn, that when men reject the word of teaching, they cannot escape the other word, which denounces the judgment of God. Teaching appears useless when not received by men; but whosoever despises his word, will find at last, to his own ruin, that the denunciations by which God confirms and ratifies the authority of his word, cannot possibly be made void: *as*, then, *they heard not the word which I had spoken to them*, come upon them shall all the evils *which I have pronounced against them.*

By adding, *I have called and they answered not*, he amplifies the atrocity of their sin; for God had not simply shewn what was necessary for their salvation, but had also called them to himself, and had even loudly called them; but he spoke to the deaf, for they answered not. It follows,—

18. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you;

18. Domui autem Rechabitarum dixit Jeremias, sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Propterea quod audistis (*vel*, obedivistis) mandato Jonadab patris vestri, et servastis omnia ejus mandata, et fecistis secundum omnia quæ præceperat vobis,—

19. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.

19. Propterea sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Non excidetur vir ex Jonadab filio Rechab, quin stet coram facie mea cunctis diebus.

Here the Prophet, that he might affect the Jews more deeply, promises a reward to the sons of Jonadab, because they obeyed their father; and he promises them a blessing from God. Nor is it to be wondered at, for this commandment, as Paul says, is the first to which a promise is annexed. (Eph. vi. 2.) God promises generally a reward to all who keep the Law, for every command has in general connected with it the hope of reward; but this is in a special manner added to the Fifth Commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest prolong thy life," &c. It is, then, nothing strange that God promised a reward to the Rechabites, because they followed the command of their father, for he had promised that in the Law.

But what the Papists allege, that the obedience rendered to the Church is on the same account pleasing to God, may, as we have said, be easily confuted; for if the Rechabites had followed the command of their father in a thing unlawful, they would have been worthy of punishment; but as this precept, as we have shewn, was not inconsistent with God's Law, God approved of their obedience. But the laws which are made for the purpose of setting up fictitious modes of worship are altogether impious, for they introduce idolatry. God has prescribed how he would have us to worship him; whatever, therefore, men bring in of themselves is wholly impious, for it adulterates the pure worship of God; and further, when necessity is laid on consciences, it is, as we have said, a tyrannical bondage. Such was not the object of Jonadab; for what he commanded his posterity was useful, and referred only to things of this life; and it did not bind their consciences; for when it was necessary they moved to Jerusalem and dwelt as others in houses; for they did not erect tents at Jerusalem, but lived in hired dwellings; and yet they obeyed their father's command, for his purpose in ordering them to dwell in tents, was, that they might remain unincumbered, so that they might be always ready to

move. We hence see how foolishly the Papists pervert this passage in order to support their tyrannical laws.

And thus this truth may stand, that the obedience of the Rechabites pleased God, because nature itself requires that children should obey their parents; and we also know that God often rewards the shadows of virtues in order to shew that virtues themselves are pleasing to him.[1] But there is no doubt but that this promise, as I have before said, was designedly given, in order to stimulate the Jews, according to what is said in the Song of Moses, "I will provoke them by a foolish nation, because they have provoked me by those who are no gods; and I will take vengeance on them, for I will bring forth nations which were not before." (Deut. xxxii. 21.) So then God now, in order to excite and rouse the Jews, promises to bless the Rechabites, because they had been obedient to their father, *There shall not be cut off a man from Jonadab*, that is, from the offspring of Jonadab, *standing* (literally) *before my face;* but as the conciseness of the verse renders it obscure and ambiguous, I have introduced an addition,—but that *he may stand before my face.* And he says that they would stand before his face, not that they were to be priests or Levites, as some of the Rabbins have said, who have applied this passage to the priesthood, because it is often said in Scripture both of the Levites and the priests, that they stood before the face of God. They, therefore, think that the same thing is meant here when spoken of the Rechabites. But this is a strained meaning. God simply intimates, that some of Jonadab's offspring would be always living, and that through his special favour, that their obedience might not appear to be without its just reward. This is the meaning. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1. And it came to pass, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

1. Et fuit anno quarto Joakim filii Josiæ regis Jehudah (fuit inquam) sermo hic ad Jeremiam a Jehova, dicendo,

2. Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I

2. Sume tibi volumen libri, et scribe in eo cunctos sermones quos

[1] We see an instance of this in Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 27-29.—*Ed.*

have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.	loquutus sum ad te contra Israel et contra Jehudah, et contra cunctos gentes a die quo loquutus sum ad te, a diebus scilicet Josiæ usque ad hunc diem.

The Prophet relates in this chapter a history worthy of being remembered, and very useful to us; for he says that he wrote down by God's command what he had previously taught in the Temple, and also that he sent that summary by Baruch to be recited in the Temple, that the report of this spread, and that the king's counsellors called to them Baruch, and that when they heard what was written in the volume, they brought word to the king, having, however, first admonished Baruch to conceal himself, together with Jeremiah, lest the king should be exasperated against them. And so it happened, for the king, being instantly filled with indignation, ordered Jeremiah and Baruch to be taken, that they might be put to death; but they were hidden and protected through God's favour. We shall hereafter see what the king by his obduracy had effected, even to cause the Prophet to speak more boldly against him.

The Prophet then says at the beginning, that *the word of Jehovah came*, by which he was ordered to *write in a volume of a book whatever he had previously spoken.* By the volume of a book he means the volume in which he was to write; for ספר, *sepher*, does not here mean a written book, for the volume was without any writing. Then the Prophet must have dictated to his servant Baruch. And this mode of speaking occurs also elsewhere, as in Psalm xl. 7. But the Hebrews, according to an ancient custom, called a volume מגלה, *megele;* for they had no books in a compact form, such as we have in the present day, but had volumes or rolls; and the same word, volume, is also used in Latin. For as the Hebrews called what is folded up מגלה, *megele*, which comes from גלל, *gelal*, to fold up, or to roll; so the Latins also have derived it from a verb (*volvo*) which means to roll, and we call it *rolle;* and in Gaul they used the same form of writing; for all ancient documents and also judicial proceedings were wont formerly to be written on rolls, and in the old archieves there is nothing found but what is so written.

God then ordered his Prophet to take a roll, and then he commanded him to *write all the words* which he had heard from the mouth of God, and which he had pronounced against Israel, and against Judah, and against all other nations.

We see here, in the first place, what is the benefit of having the Scripture, even that what would otherwise vanish away or escape the memory of man, may remain and be handed down from one to another, and also that it may be read; for what is written can be better weighed during leisure time. When one speaks only, every one takes in something according to his capacity and his attention; but as words from man's mouth glide away, the utility of Scripture does hence appear more evident; for when what is not immediately understood is repeated, it brings more light, and then what one reads to-day he may read to-morrow, and next year, and many years after. As then God saw that he had been, as it were, beating the air when he had spoken by his Prophet, his purpose was that those things which Jeremiah had in vain spoken, should be written down. In this manner he, no doubt, intended to condemn both the king and his counsellors, and also the whole people, not only for their idleness, but also for their insensibility, even because all his teaching had been without fruit, though Jeremiah had laboured much among them, and had been assiduous and faithful in the discharge of his office as a teacher.

We now perceive the design of God in saying, *Take a volume* and *write in it;* and he says, *all the words which I have spoken to thee.* This was said in order that the Jews might understand that Jeremiah did not bring forward his own fictions, but faithfully delivered what he had heard from God's mouth. He adds, *against Israel and against Judah.* For Jeremiah at the beginning had prophesied against the ten tribes; but after the kingdom of Israel was cut off, he performed his office only towards the remaining people, so that his doctrine referred especially to the Jews. It is added, *against all nations;* and this we shall presently see; and it hence appears that his prophecies were not written

according to the order of time, as I have before reminded you, but that the volume was written without regard to order. It was yet so far preserved that this book contains a summary of all the doctrine taught by Jeremiah during the whole course of his ministry. He says, *from the day in which he began to speak*, even *from the days of Josiah*, he says, *to this day*. And the Prophet had been performing his duty as a teacher, not for ten, or twenty, or thirty, but for forty years. It follows,—

3. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

3. Si forte audiant domus Jehudah omne malum quod ego cogito ad faciendum (*hoc est*, facere) ipsis, ut revertantur quisque a via sua mala; et propitius sim iniquitati eorum et peccato eorum.

Here God explains the object he had in view, even to make another trial whether the Jews were healable, so that the teaching of the Prophet might be conducive to their salvation. But he uses the particle אוּלַי, *auli*, "it may be," which implies a doubt; because they had so often, and for so long a time, and in such various ways, shewed themselves to be so obstinate that hardly a hope could be entertained of their repentance. God, however, shews that he was not wearied, provided there remained in them still the smallest particle of religion. *It may be then*, he says, *that the house of Judah will hear all the evil*, &c.

We have seen how the Prophet laboured, not only to terrify his own nation by threatenings, but also sweetly to allure them to the service of God; but God speaks here of them as of perverse men, who were almost intractable, according to what is said in Psalm xviii. 26, that God would be severe towards the perverse; for God deals with men according to their disposition. As the Jews then were unworthy that God should, according to his gentleness, teach them as children, this only remained for them, to repent under the influence of fear. *It may be*, he says, that they will *bear all the evil*, &c. We now see why God touches only on threatenings, for this alone remained for men so obstinate.

He says, *The evil which I think to do*, &c. God here transfers to himself what belongs to men; for he does not think

or deliberate with himself; but as we cannot comprehend his incomprehensible counsel, he sometimes assumes the person of man; and this is what is common in Scripture. But he says, that he *thinks* of what he *pronounces* in his word; for as long as God exhorts men to repent, he holds, as it were, his hand suspended, and allows an opportunity to repent. He then says, that he is, as it were, in the midst of his deliberations: as when one wants to know whether an offender will submit, so God transforms himself, in a manner, into what man is, when he says, *I think;* that is, let them know that vengeance is not in vain denounced in my word; for I will perform whatever I now threaten, except they repent.

He says, *That they may turn every one from his evil way.* This is to *hear*, previously mentioned, even when men become seriously touched, so as to be displeased with their vices, and to desire from the heart to surrender themselves to God. He joins a promise, for without the hope of pardon it cannot be, that men will repent, as it has been often said; but it must be repeated, because few understand that faith cannot be separated from repentance; and a sinner can never be induced to return truly to God, unless he entertains a hope of pardon, for this is a main truth, according to what is said in Psalm cxxx. 4, "With thee is mercy, that thou mayest be feared." Then, according to what is commonly done, the Prophet says, that if the Jews turned to God, he would be propitious to them, as though he had said, that men would not be disappointed, if they repent, because God would readily meet them, and be reconciled to them: for this one thing alone, as I have said, is what can encourage us to repent, that is, when we are convinced that God is ready to give us pardon. He mentions *iniquity and sin.* The Prophet, no doubt, referred to these two words, in order to shew that we ought by no means to despair, though sins be heaped on sins. It follows—

4. Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.

4. Et vocavit Jeremias Baruch filium Neriæ; et scripsit Baruch ex ore Jeremiæ cunctos sermones Jehovæ, quos loquutus est ad ipsum, in volumine libri.

5. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I *am* shut up; I cannot go into the house of the Lord:

6. Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord, in the ears of the people, in the Lord's house upon the fasting-day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.

5. Et præcepit Jeremias ipsi Baruch, dicendo, Ego detineor (*vel*, sum conclusus,) non potero venire in domum Jehovæ (*hoc est*, in Templum:)

6. Tu autem vade, et lege in volumine quod scripseris ex ore meo, sermones Jehovæ in auribus populi, in domo Jehovæ, in die jejunii, atque etiam in auribus totius Jehudah, qui venerint (*hoc est*, omnium Judæorum qui venerint) ex urbibus suis, tu leges ipsis.

Here the Prophet declares that he dictated to Baruch, a servant of God, whatever he had previously taught. But there is no doubt but that God suggested to the Prophet at the time what might have been erazed from his memory; for all the things which we have some time ago said, do not always occur to us. Therefore the greater part of so many words must have escaped the Prophet, had not God dictated them again to him. Jeremiah then stood, as it were, between God and Baruch; for God, by his Spirit, presided over and guided the mind and tongue of the Prophet. Now the Prophet, the Spirit being his guide and teacher, recited what God had commanded; and Baruch wrote down, and then proclaimed the whole summary of what the Prophet had taught.

He therefore says, that he *called to him Baruch the son of Neria*, who wrote from his mouth, and he wrote *all the words of Jehovah*. Jeremiah repeats again that nothing came from himself. We hence see that he did not dictate, according to his own will, what came to his mind, but that God suggested whatever he wished to be written by Baruch. It is added, that he commanded Baruch to recite in the Temple what he had written, because he himself was detained. Some think that he was shut up in prison; and he used the same word before, when he told us that he was cast into prison by Zedekiah. But as sacred history does not say that he suffered any such thing under Jehoiakim, I am inclined to think that he was prevented by God; I do not, however, ascribe it to a divine oracle; for it might have happened either through God's command, or through some human impediments.[1] If we believe the Prophet to

[1] Blaney's suggestion is not improbable, that the Prophet, having been

have been in prison, and that he might have gone out, he yet abstained; for the more liberty was given him, the more bound he felt himself to continue in prison, lest he should violate public authority. But the other supposition is more probable, that he was detained by God's hand. However this may have been, he says that he could not go forth; and he mentioned this, lest it should appear that he was only careful as to himself, and that through fear of danger, he devolved this duty on Baruch. He then shews that he did not shun his office, because it exposed him to hatred, but that he was not at liberty to go forth.

Go thou, then, he says, *and read in the volume.* The Prophet, in this case, was ready to incur any odium which might be, for he did not bid Baruch to relate by memory what he had heard from him, but ordered him to take the volume, and to read, as we shall hereafter see, what he had written. The Prophet then did not, in this instance, avoid danger, and put Baruch in his own place, but he expressly told him to read from the volume: *What thou hast written*, he says, *from my mouth*, and, *what Jehovah has spoken*, these things *read thou to the people in* the Temple, on *a fasting day.* This day was chosen, first, because there was then a greater concourse of people, according to what immediately follows, for he was to read these things in the ears not only of the citizens, but also of the whole people; and on fast-days they were wont, as it is well known, to come in great numbers to the city for the purpose of sacrificing. It was then God's purpose that these threatenings should be proclaimed, not only to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but also to all other Jews, that the report of them might spread to every part of the land. In the second place, such a day was much more suitable to the message conveyed; for why was a fast enjoined, except humbly to supplicate God's mercy, and to deprecate his wrath? As then this was the design of a fast, the Jews ought to have been then, as it were, in a submissive state of mind, prepared calmly to receive these threatenings, and to profit by them.

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We then see that there were two reasons why the Prophet, by God's command, fixed on this day,—first, because there was a larger number of people,—and, secondly, because a fast ought to have rendered them teachable, so that they might more readily submit to God, acknowledge their sins, and, being terrified, might also flee to God's mercy, and thus loathe themselves on account of their sins. The rest tomorrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not continually to provoke thine anger against us, we may at length return to thee, and that every one may so examine his life, that being prostrate under a sense of thy wrath, we may betake ourselves to the only true remedy, even to implore thee, and to seek forgiveness; and do thou also so graciously meet us, that we may in sure faith call on thee, and, in the meantime, find really, by experience, that our prayers are not in vain, until we shall at length have a perfect enjoyment of thy mercy, in thy celestial kingdom.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-Second.

7. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way: for great *is* the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people.

7. Si forte cadat precatio ipsorum coram facie Jehovæ, et convertantur quisque a via sua mala; quia magna est excandescentia et magna iracundia quam locutus est Jehova contra populum hunc.

JEREMIAH, after having dictated to the scribe Baruch what he had before preached to the people, repeats what the object was, which we have previously observed; for it was God's will to make the trial, whether the people could by any means be restored to a sound mind. This had, indeed, been in vain attempted for a long time; but God was yet willing to proceed to the utmost extent in his mercy. Hence Jeremiah now declares the purpose for which he wished the book to be read to the people. Nor is there a doubt but that Baruch had been thus admonished, that he might exhort the people to repentance as it were from the mouth of Jeremiah.

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Now, there are two things mentioned as necessary in order to obtain pardon,—prayer, and turning or conversion. For if any one only in words seeks to be reconciled to God, he will not succeed. Turning or conversion cannot be separated from prayer. But then were a sinner to repent a thousand times, he would still remain exposed to God's judgment; for reconciliation, by which we are absolved, does not depend on repentance, but on the gratuitous favour of God; for God does not receive us into favour because he sees that we are changed to a better mind, as though conversion were the cause of pardon; but he embraces us according to his gratuitous mercy. This, then, is the reason why Jeremiah joins together these two things—prayer, and conversion or repentance; for as I have said, hypocrites confess in words their sins and seek pardon, but it is with a feigned or a double heart. Hence that prayer may be genuine, repentance must be added, by which men shew that they loathe themselves. And then, on the other hand, it is not enough for us to turn or repent, except the sinner flees to the mercy of God, for pardon flows from that fountain; for God, as it has been said, does not forgive us for any merit in us, but because it seemeth him good to bury our sins. The sum of the whole is, that God would have the prophecies of Jeremiah to be recited before the whole people, as they were conducive to their safety and salvation. The manner is described,—that the people were humbly to pray and also really to repent.

As to the expression, *It may be, a prayer will fall,*[1] we have elsewhere explained its meaning. The Scripture speaks of prayer, that it rises and that it falls. Both expressions are suitable, though to be understood in a different way; for prayer cannot be rightly offered except man ascends and falls. These two things seem contrary, but they well agree together; nay, they cannot be separated. For in prayer two things are necessary—faith and humility: by faith we rise up to God, and by humility we lie prostrate on the ground. This is the reason why Scripture often says that prayer

[1] So the verb is rendered in the *Sept.* and *Vulg.*; but "accepted" by the *Syr.* and *Targ.* Our version is a paraphrase; to convey fully the meaning the word "humbly" ought to have been introduced, "It may be, they will humbly present their supplication," &c.—*Ed.*

ascends, for we cannot pray as we ought unless we raise upwards our minds; and faith, sustained by promises, elevates us above all the world. Thus then prayer is raised upwards by faith; but by humility it falls down on the earth; for fear ought to be connected with faith. And as faith in our hearts produces alacrity by confidence, so also conscience casts us down and lays us prostrate. We now understand the meaning of the expression.

He adds, *Because great is the wrath and indignation which Jehovah hath pronounced,* or hath spoken, *against this people.* By wrath and indignation we are to understand God's vengeance, the cause being put for the effect. But the Prophet intimates, that except men are wholly blinded, and as it were estranged in mind, they ought to be very deeply touched, when God sets before them some dreadful judgment. When God chastises some slight fault, and when he does not so very grievously threaten us, we ought to feel alarmed; but when God shews his wrath to be so kindled that final ruin ought to be dreaded, we must be stupid indeed, if such a threatening does not terrify us. Then the Prophet says that there was no hope of relaxation, for God had pronounced no light or common judgment on the people; but he shews that he was prepared to destroy the whole nation, as the Jews had deserved extreme punishment.

8. And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the Lord in the Lord's house.

8. Et fecit Baruch filius Neriæ secundum omnia quæ præceperat ei Jeremias Propheta, legendo in libro sermones Jehovæ in domo Jehovæ.

Here the promptitude of Baruch is commended, for he did not disobey God's Prophet, but willingly undertook the office deputed to him. His office, as we have said, was not without danger. As then his message was by no means popular, but on the contrary very disagreeable, hence is seen the devotedness of Baruch. He made no refusal, for he knew that this burden was laid on him for some purpose. Jeremiah then says, that *he did as he had been commanded,* and *read* in the Temple the *words of Jehovah.*[1] He calls them a little far-

[1] I render this verse as follows,—
8. And Baruch, the son of Neriah, did according to all that Jeremiah the

ther on *the words of Jeremiah*, but the same thing is meant; for as God is, as it were, represented by his ministers, so he often transfers to them what belongs peculiarly to himself. (Rom. ii. 16; xvi. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 8.) That is called the doctrine of Jeremiah, which yet, properly speaking, has no other author but God. So Paul called that Gospel, of which he was the preacher and witness, his Gospel; and yet he himself had not devised the Gospel, but had received it from Christ, and faithfully delivered it as from his hand.

We ought, therefore, to notice this mode of speaking, which occurs everywhere in Scripture,—the same thing is ascribed to God and to his servants. Thus we find what may seem strange,—the Apostles are said to forgive sins, they are spoken of as bringing salvation; but the reason is, because they were ministers of God's grace, and exhorted men in Christ's name to be reconciled to God. They then absolved, because they were the testifiers of absolution. So also the words which God dictated to his servant were called the words of Jeremiah; yet, properly speaking, they were not the words of man, for they did not proceed from a mortal man, but from the only true God. It follows—

9. And it came to pass, in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.

10. Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house, in the ears of all the people.

9. Et fuit anno quinto Jehoiakim filii Josiæ regis Jehudah, mense nono, indixerunt jejunium coram Jehova toti populo (qui erat, *subaudiendum est*) Jerosolymæ, et toti populo qui venerunt ex urbibus Jehudah Jerosolymam:

10. Et legit Baruch in libro sermones Jeremiæ in domo Jehovæ (*hoc est*, in Templo,) in cubiculo Gamariæ filii Saphan scribæ, in atrio superiori, in introitu (*vel*, ingressu) portæ novæ domus Jehovæ (portæ novæ Templi) in auribus totius populi.

Here is added a fuller explanation; for the Prophet re-

prophet commanded him, in order to read in the book the words of Jehovah in the house of Jehovah.

What Jeremiah had commanded Baruch was to take a roll and to write the words from his mouth: this Baruch did, and for this purpose, that he might read the words (as the *Targum* has it) in the Lord's house.—*Ed.*

lates nothing new, but according to what is common in Hebrew he expresses at large what he had before briefly stated: for he had said, that Baruch read in the Temple the words of God as he had been commanded; but he now relates when and how this was done, even in *the fifth year of Jehoiakim*, and when a *fast was proclaimed in the ninth month*.[1] We now then see the design of this repetition, even to point out more clearly the time. He then says that the book was read and recited when a fast was proclaimed in the fifth year of Jehoiakim. The Jews, no doubt, knew that some grievous calamity was at hand, for this proclamation was extraordinary. And we know that when some calamity was apprehended, they usually betook themselves to this remedy, not that fasting in itself was pleasing to God, but because it was a symbol of humiliation, and it also prepared men for prayer. This custom did not creep in without reason, but God designed thus to habituate his people to repentance. When, therefore, God manifested some tokens of his displeasure, the Jews then thought it necessary, not only to seek forgiveness, but also to add fasting to their prayers, according to what we find in the second chapter of Joel as well as in other places. It was then a solemn confession of sin and guilt; for by fasting they acknowledged themselves to be exposed to God's judgment, and also by sackcloth and ashes; for they were wont to throw aside their fine garments and to put on sackcloth, and also to scatter ashes on their heads, or to lie on the ground: and these were the filth as it were of the guilty: and in this state of debasement they sought pardon of God, thus acknowledging in the first place their own filthiness by these external symbols, and secondly, confessing before God and angels that they were worthy of death, and that no hope remained for them except God forgave them.

[1] The latter part of the verse is differently rendered in the *Sept.*, *Syr.*, and the *Targ.*, and more consistently with the Hebrew,—

— proclaim a fast before Jehovah did all the people in Jerusalem, and all the people that came from the cities into Jerusalem.

It was a fast that the people proclaimed, and not the king, who was a very ungodly one. His conduct on this occasion proved his great impiety. — *Ed.*

As, then, Jeremiah writes here that there was a fast proclaimed, there is not the least doubt but that some tokens of God's vengeance then appeared. And though Jehoiakim had provoked the King Nebuchadnezzar by refusing to pay tribute, yet the idea prevailed always among the Jews that nothing happened except through the just vengeance of God. As, then, they knew that they had to do with God, they thought that it behoved them to pacify him.

He afterwards adds, that *a fast before Jehovah was proclaimed;* not that it was meritorious, or that an expiation would thereby be done, as the Papists imagine, who think that they can redeem their sins by fastings, and hence they call them satisfactions; but the Prophet says that the fast was proclaimed *before Jehovah*, as an addition to prayer. As, then, it was a solemn meeting for prayer, fasting was, as it were, a part added to it, that they might by this external symbol more fully humble themselves before God, and at the same time testify their repentance. And he says that it was proclaimed to *all the people* who were at Jerusalem, and to the other Jews who came from other cities to the Temple to pray. And we hence conclude that fasting in itself is of no moment, but that it was an evidence of repentance, and therefore added to prayer. And Christ, having mentioned prayer, added fasting, (Matt. xvii. 21 ;) not that fasting ought not to be separated from daily prayers; for we ought always to pray; but we are not to fast morning and evening; nay, we pray when our table is prepared for us and meat are set before us; and then when we dine and sup, we pray to God. But this is to be understood of more serious prayers, when, as we have said, God summons us, as it were, before his tribunal, and shews manifest tokens of his displeasure. And for this reason also, Paul, in 1 Cor. vii. 5, when bidding husbands to dwell with their wives, adds this, "Except it may be for a time"—for what purpose? even that they might give themselves wholly to prayer and fasting. We hence see that fasting was not an ordinary thing, but when required by some urgent necessity.

Then, this also is to be noticed, that the fast was proclaimed to the other Jews who had come to Jerusalem; for

why was it necessary for them to come to Jerusalem, except humbly to supplicate God's favour.

He says that the *roll was then read in the Temple, in the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the scribe.* The chambers, as we have before said, were annexed to the court of the priests; for the Levites were the guardians of the Temple; and every priest also, while performing his duty, remained in the Temple. As to Shaphan, he is called a scribe, not the king's chancellor, who is afterwards called by the same name; for I regard him as being an actuary. For they called the scribes סְפָרִים, *sepharim;* but sometimes by this name are meant the interpreters of the Law, and sometimes the actuaries, whose office it was to collect the prophecies, or who were engaged in collecting public acts. Then Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the scribe, had his chamber in the Temple; and he says, in *the higher court.* Hence we conclude, according to what I have already said, that these chambers were parts of the court. And he adds, *In the entrance of the new gate of the Temple.* Some think that this was the eastern gate, and that the greatest concourse of people was usually there. We hence see that Baruch boldly performed his duty in reading the roll, though the reading of it must have greatly exasperated the minds of the whole people. It follows,—

11. When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the Lord,

12. Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, *even* Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes.

13. Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people.

11. Et audivit Michas filius Gamariæ filii Saphan omnes sermones Jehovæ de super libro (*hoc est,* ut recitabantur ex libro;)

12. Et descendit in domum regis ad cubiculum scribæ; et ecce illic omnes principes sedentes (*hoc est,* sedebant,) Elisama scriba, et Dalaiah filius Semaiah, et Elnathan filius Achobor, et Gamarias filius Saphan, et Zedechias filius Chananiæ, et omnes proceres;

13. Et nuntiavit (indicavit) ipsis Michas omnes sermones quos audierat cum legeret Baruch in libro (*hoc est,* recitaret ex libro) in auribus populi.

It is not known with what design this Michaiah came to

the princes and the king's counsellors. He may have been an informer, who intended to create ill-will to the Prophet, and to ingratiate himself with the princes, as courtiers usually do. If this was the case, we may learn from this example, that not all who hear are so teachable and ready to obey as to make proficiency in the knowledge of good and holy doctrine: we see that many patiently hear and give some evidence of docility, and yet cherish perverseness in their hearts, and afterwards calumniate what they have heard. Such may have been the character of Michaiah, spoken of here. But his case may have been different,—that being filled with wonder, he conveyed to the king's counsellors what he deemed new and, as it were, incredible. I leave this without offering an opinion, for we have nothing certain on the subject.

It is said that he came into *the king's palace*, where all the princes sat, and *into the chamber of the scribe*. It is probable that this scribe was the king's chancellor, with whom were all the princes of the court. Some he names, and then says, that they were *all there*, and that Michaiah *read* to them the words which he had heard from the mouth of Baruch when he read to the whole people.

Now it was not without the wonderful purpose of God that the king at length came to know what had passed in the Temple, in order that his perverseness against God might be detected, as we shall hereafter see. This messenger, indeed, was the means of bringing danger to Jeremiah as well as to his servant Baruch; but the Lord protected them. However, the impiety and the obstinacy of the king were discovered; for when they were all terrified, he despised God and became enraged against his Prophet. He burnt the book, and wished also to destroy its author. It now follows,—

14. Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them.

14. Et miserunt omnes proceres ad Baruch, Jehudi filium Nathaniæ, filii Selemiæ, filii Cussi, dicendo, Volumen in quo legisti in auribus populi sume in manum tuam, et veni. Et sumpsit Baruch filius Neriæ volumen in manum suam, et venit ad ipsos.

They ought indeed to have gone up immediately into the Temple; but though they were not wholly irreligious, yet they shewed some pride, as they commonly do who are surrounded with splendour, being not disposed to humble themselves. We see that all courtiers are so inflated with pride, that they think it a disgrace to mingle with the common people. They wish some special honour to be reserved for themselves. This was the reason that they did not go up into the Temple that they might learn the message, but sent for Baruch to come to them. Now it was this that prevented them from the heart to repent.

We shall indeed see that they were smitten with fear, and filled with amazement; and we shall also see that they brought the matter before the king, and yet wished to provide for the safety of the Prophet and his servant; but they ought to have gone farther, even to join the people in the Temple, and make a public confession of their repentance. Why they did not we have explained: pride, vanity, and ambition always accompany wealth and power.

Baruch was then sent for, but in an honourable manner; for they did not send an obscure man; and hence his genealogy is given, and not only the name of his father is mentioned, but that of his grandfather and of his great-grandfather; and hence we conclude that he was a man of some eminence. They commanded him to come, and it is added, that having taken the roll he *came to them;* by which he manifested his firmness. His promptitude previously was commendable, that he ventured to go forth to the Temple and publicly to recite what tended to kindle the rage of the whole people. As in the beginning, he promptly undertook the office deputed to him, so now he persevered in the same course. He came to the princes; and he did not hide the roll, though he might have been carrying with him his own death, but he boldly went forth to them, for he knew that the whole business was under the direction of God. It follows,—

15. And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read *it* in their ears.

15. Et dixerunt, sede agedum, et lege ipsum (volumen) in auribus nostris; et legit Baruch in auribus ipsorum.

16. Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid, both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words.

16. Et factum est cum audirent cunctos sermones, expaverunt quisque ad propinquum suum, et dixerunt ipsi Baruch, Indicando indicabimus Regi omnes hos sermones.

We see that there was some regard for religion in the princes, for they submitted to hear, and respectfully received the Prophet's servant. Had Jeremiah himself come, he would, no doubt, have been received as God's Prophet, as such honour was given to his servant, that the princes ordered him to be seated, which was certainly a favour. It hence appears that they were not profane despisers of God. Then follows another thing,—that they were moved *with fear*. Then as to the king's counsellors, we see that they were in such a state of mind, that they readily listened to, and dreaded the threatenings of God. But it was a fear that no doubt soon vanished; and what he says, that *they feared each as to his neighbour*, was a sign of a change; for he who fears as he ought, thinks of himself, and examines himself before God; but when the mind wavers, every one looks to another. It was then a sign of repentance not real and genuine, so to fear as to look to one another, for they ought, each of them, to look to God, that they might from an inward consciousness acknowledge their sins, and thus flee to the true remedy.

It follows, that they *said, Declaring we shall declare to the king*, &c. We hence learn, that their fear was such, that they did not yet wish to offend the king. They then referred the matter to him, being anxious to gratify him. This is the religion of the court, even so to fear God as not to lose favour, but on the contrary, so to perform one's duty, as not to be liable to the charge of not being sufficiently attentive and devoted to the king's interest. In short, the Prophet thus represents to us, as in a glass, the religion of the king's counsellors, and shews to us at the same time that their minds were corrupted by ambition, and that ambition so prevailed, that they paid more regard to a mortal king than to the only true King of heaven.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou art pleased to invite us daily to thyself, we may respond to thy call in the spirit of meekness and obedience; and do thou also so seriously impress our minds, that we may not only confess our sins, but also so loathe ourselves on account of them, that we may without delay seek the true remedy, and, relying on thy mercy, may so repent, that thy name may hereafter be glorified in us, until we shall at length become partakers of that glory, which thy Son has obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-Third.

17. And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?

18. Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book.

17. Baruch autem interrogarunt, dicendo, Indica agedum nobis quomodo scripseris cunctos sermones istos ex ore ejus?

18. Et dixit illis Baruch, Ex ore suo pronuntiavit mihi cunctos sermones istos, et ego scripsi super librum cum atramento.

The king's counsellors were, no doubt, so astonished when they heard that these threatenings had been written as the Prophet had dictated them, that they were agitated by different thoughts, as the unbelieving are wont to be; and not receiving as they ought to have done, the heavenly doctrine, they vacillated, and could not pursue a uniform course. Such, then, was the uncertainty that possessed the minds of the princes; for they could hardly believe that these words had been delivered by memory, but had suspicion of some trickery, as the unbelieving imagine many such things respecting God's servants; and they seem to act thus designedly, that they may obscure God's favour, which appears before their eyes. For this purpose, then, they are said to *ask Baruch* how he took the *words from the mouth of Jeremiah.*[1]

[1] Some have made two questions here,—"How didst thou write all these words? from his mouth?" The answer seems to favour this construction; as usual in Scripture, the last question is answered first, and then the first: Baruch said, "From his mouth he pronounced to me all these words;" and then he adds, answering the first question, "and I wrote on the book with ink."—*Ed.*

what had been related to him, for if he wished to be free from all trouble, why did he order the roll to be brought to him, and a part of it to be read? We hence see that the unbelieving, though they wish to go as far as possible from God, yet run to him in a sort of blind manner; but this they do not of their own accord; for God by his secret impulse draws them to himself, so as to render them more inexcusable. Hence it comes, that curiosity leads many to hear the truth, and some madly ask, what is the truth to them? like wild beasts when they run against swords. Such was the disposition of Jehoiakim, for he wished all the prophecies of Jeremiah to be buried; and yet he could not restrain himself, but would know the substance or some part of them. He therefore *sent Jehudi to fetch the roll.*

It is then added, that *Jehudi read the roll before the king and before* his counsellors. Hence it was that his impiety became more evident, as he was not moved by the predictions read to him. He could not indeed endure the recitation, but after some chapters had been finished, he became so enraged, as we shall see, that he threw the roll into the fire and burnt it. It was, however, God's purpose to take away from the king as well as from his counsellors every pretext, that they might not afterwards allege that they had fallen through ignorance, for after the roll had been presented to them, it was their own fault if they were not restored to that state of safety from which they had fallen. He now adds—

22. Now the king sat in the winter-house, in the ninth month: and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him.

23. And it came to pass, *that* when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth.

22. Rex autem sedebat in domo hyemali, mense nono; et focus coram facie ejus accensus (*vel*, ardebat;)

23. Et factum est, cum legisset Jehudi tres paginas et quatuor (*hoc est*, tres vel quatuor) scidit cultello scribæ (*vel*, graphio,) et projecit in ignem qui erat in foco, usque dum consumeret volumen totum super ignem qui erat in foco.

Here Jeremiah shews how little he had effected; for the king not only cast aside but tore the roll into pieces, and after having torn it, he wished its memory to perish, for he

cast it into the fire. This trial must have grievously affected the mind of the Prophet; he had dictated that roll by God's command; he saw now that all his labour had been in vain. He might then have complained to God that so much labour had been spent without fruit. For why had God bidden the roll to be written, except for the purpose of leading the king and his counsellors to repentance. As to the people, the Prophet could not know whether it had answered the end for which he sent his scribe Baruch to them, for no account is given as to the attention paid by them. But Baruch was led to the king's palace, so the minds of all were kept in suspense: what was now the issue? The king burnt the roll. There is no doubt then but that the mind of the Prophet was much affected. But God thus exercises his servants when he bids them to speak to the deaf or to bring light to the blind.

Let us then learn simply to obey God, though the labour he requires from us may seem to be useless. And hence Paul rises above all the ingratitude of the world and says, that the ministers of the Gospel are a sweet odour to God, whether for death or for life, (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16;) for though the greater part are rendered worse by hearing the Gospel, yet the obedience rendered to God by ministers is acceptable to him, nor is the event to be looked to. Jeremiah then saw that the king's mind was exasperated, but he did not on that account repent of his obedience, for he knew that the event was to be left with God and to his will. The duty of men is to execute whatever God commands, though no fruit may appear to proceed from their labours. This then is one thing.

Now as to the king, we see in him as in a glass how monstrous is their blindness who are the slaves of Satan. Surely the king, when God so thundered in his ears, ought to have been terrified. He could not indeed treat the word with ridicule, but he became enraged, and acted violently like a rabid wild beast, and vented his rage against the roll itself! If he thought Jeremiah to have been the author, why did he not disregard him as a man of no authority in public affairs? for Jeremiah could not have lessened his character as a king. There is then no doubt but that he

perceived, though unwillingly, that he had to do with God; why then did he become thus enraged? what could he hope to gain by such madness towards God? But this, as I have said, was that dreadful blindness which is found in all the reprobate, whose minds the devil has fascinated; for on the one hand they perceive, willing or unwilling, that God is present, and that they are in a manner summoned to his tribunal; and on the other, as though they were forgetful of God, they rage madly against him.

It is then said of King Jehoiakim, that while he was in his winter-house and sitting before the fire,[1] when three or four pages had been read, he cut the roll with an iron pen, or with the small knife of a scribe. The word תַּעַר, *tor*, means often a razor, but is to be taken here for the knife used by scribes, *un canivet*. The king, in the first place, did not wait until Jehudi finished the roll; after he had heard three or four leaves, or pages, as we call them, he seized the roll and cut it; and in the second place, being not content with this sacrilege he burnt the roll, as though he could abolish God's judgment together with the book. But we shall hereafter see what he gained by this intemperate spirit in burning the roll *until the whole was consumed in the fire*. It now follows—

24. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, *neither* the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.

24. Et non timuerunt et non sciderunt vestes suas rex et cuncti servi ejus, cum audissent cunctos sermones istos.

The Prophet now connects doctrine with the narrative, for what we have hitherto seen would be frigid were no instruction added. The Prophet then shews why he had related what we have read of the king's impious obstinacy. But there is more force in a simple statement than if the Prophet in high-sounding words inveighed against the king and his counsellors; for he speaks here as one astonished; They *rent not*, he says, their garments, *nor feared* when they

[1] There were no chimneys, and therefore no "hearths" in the East. The word rendered "hearth" here means properly a brasier, and אֵת before it is a preposition. The verse may be thus rendered,—

And the king was sitting in the winter-house, in the ninth month, and at the brasier burning (or, which was burning) before him.

It is "a small altar, arula," in the *Vulg.*; "fire" in the *Syr.* and *Targ.*; but "hearth" in the *Sept.*—*Ed.*

heard threatenings so dreadful. And doubtless it may be justly deemed as the most monstrous of things, that miserable men should with such contempt disregard the threatenings of God, which yet they ought to have dreaded no less than instant destruction. That mortals then should not be moved when God fulminates by his threatenings against them, but on the contrary become more hardened—this is an evidence of a diabolical madness. It is hence not without reason that the Prophet says, as one astonished, that neither the king nor his counsellors *feared* nor *rent* their garments.

Now, we are taught in this passage that it is a sign of reprobation when we are not terrified when God threatens and declares that he will become our judge, and when he brings forward our sins, and also shews what we deserve. When, therefore, all those things produce no effect on us, it is a sure sign of hopeless madness. This is what the Prophet means when he says, they *feared not*, for his object was to shew that all, as well as himself, ought to stand amazed, that the king and his counsellors could thus fearlessly withstand the threatenings of God.

As to the *garments*, the sign is put for the thing itself; and then a statement of a part is made for the whole: in the first place, to rend the garments is of no great moment, unless the heart be first rent, as Joel says in the second chapter; but though hypocrites make a shew of repentance by fallacious signs, yet when true and sincere repentance is treated of, the sign is put in the place of the thing signified, as in this passage, they *rent not their garments*, that is, they manifested no fear. And as the rending of garments was usually done, he says that they rent not their garments, when God by the mouth of Jeremiah and by the hand of Baruch fulminated against them. There is, in the second place, a part stated for the whole, because they were wont to put on sackcloth, and to sprinkle ashes on their heads. There is here a mention made only of garments; but other signs were also included.

He says, *When they heard all these words;* not that the king heard the whole volume, but three or four chapters

were sufficient to condemn him ; for there is no doubt but that he was abundantly convicted, and that he threw himself into such a rage as to cut the roll and not to rend his garments, because he dreaded God's judgment. And there is a striking alliteration in the words קָרַע, *koro*, to cut, and קָרָא, *kora*, to read, the first ending with ע, *oin*, and the other with א, *aleph*. He had previously said, that when Jehudah read a part of the roll, the king cut it ; the one read and the other cut ; and he says here, that the king did not cut (it is the same word) or rend his garments. The king had before cut the roll and torn it in pieces, when, on the contrary, he and the rest ought to have cut or torn their garments, and were it lawful, even themselves, when God terrified them with such dreadful threatenings. It follows—

25. Nevertheless Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah, had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll; but he would not hear them.

25. Quinetiam Elnathan et Dalaia et Gamaria, intercesserunt regi (*vel*, prohibuerunt regem, *vel* rogarunt ; *nam* פָּגַע *omnia hæc significat, occurrere, vel deprecari, vel prohibere, et se interponere;* illi *ergo conati sunt regi occurrere,*) ne combureret volumen, et non audivit ipsos.

The Prophet aggravates the wickedness of the king by this circumstance, that three men opposed him, though they thereby subjected themselves to great danger. They saw that the king was carried away by the violence of his temper ; and when he resisted God in a manner so insolent, what would he not have dared to do to them ? That they notwithstanding hesitated not to intercede with him, was an instance of great courage. But it hence appears, that as the king did not attend to their counsel, his impiety was extreme.

The particle וְגַם, *ugam*, is to be rendered *nevertheless*. Many interpreters have not attended here to what is emphatical, and have therefore perverted the meaning of the Prophet, or at least have extenuated it so as not to represent faithfully the object of the Prophet ; for there is, as I have said, a very emphatic exaggeration in the word *Nevertheless*. And let us learn from this passage, that when God draws us back from wicked designs, we are less excusable if we persevere in executing what he clearly shews ought not to be

done. Conscience will indeed always be to us in the place of thousand witnesses; and though no one be present as a witness or an adviser or a monitor, yet we shall in vain try to escape before God by pretending ignorance or mistake or want of thought: but when the Lord by the instrumentality of men calls us back, so that we may not go on in evil ways, if we are not persuaded to desist, then discovered more fully is our incorrigible perverseness, according to what the Prophet intimates here. In short, let us know that any one sins the more grievously, the more means God employs to draw him back from his evil course.

Since, then, we see how obstinate Jehoiakim was, there is no reason for us to wonder, that many at this day go on presumptuously in their course, though God as it were checks them, or at least sends men to restrain them. Let us, then, know that it is an old evil, so that we may not be disturbed by such a presumptuous contempt of the ungodly.

Let us also notice the example given here of a bold admonition: for it is something like a miracle to find those at this day in the courts of princes, who are bold enough to remonstrate when there is much danger; for, as it has been before stated, every one is ingenious in devising means to flatter; and as this is the best and shortest way to elevation, all apply themselves assiduously to this art. The Prophet had indeed said that the king and his counsellors did not rend their garments, and yet he tells us now of three who openly professed that they feared God: but when he spoke before of all the princes, we must understand him as speaking of them as a body. Then the three, mentioned now, must be excepted; nor is there a doubt but that they incurred the displeasure of all the courtiers, as they had them opposed to them, since they must have been ashamed of their own negligence; but they dared to draw on themselves the displeasure both of the king and of all the rest, for they saw that it was God's cause. It follows—

26. But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe, and Jere-

26. Et præcepit rex Jerameel filio Hamelek (*vel*, regis, *sed existimant esse nomen proprium, et est probabile,*) et Seraiæ filio Abdeel, et Selemiæ filio Abdeel, ut acciperent Ba-

were sufficient to condemn him ; for there is no doubt but that he was abundantly convicted, and that he threw himself into such a rage as to cut the roll and not to rend his garments, because he dreaded God's judgment. And there is a striking alliteration in the words קָרַע, *koro*, to cut, and קָרָא, *kora*, to read, the first ending with ע, *oin*, and the other with א, *aleph*. He had previously said, that when Jehudah read a part of the roll, the king cut it ; the one read and the other cut ; and he says here, that the king did not cut (it is the same word) or rend his garments. The king had before cut the roll and torn it in pieces, when, on the contrary, he and the rest ought to have cut or torn their garments, and were it lawful, even themselves, when God terrified them with such dreadful threatenings. It follows—

25. Nevertheless Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah, had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll; but he would not hear them.

25. Quinetiam Elnathan et Dalaia et Gamaria, intercesserunt regi (*vel*, prohibuerunt regem, *vel* rogarunt ; *nam* פָּגַע *omnia hæc significat, occurrere, vel deprecari, vel prohibere, et se interponere ;* illi *ergo conati sunt regi occurrere,*) ne combureret volumen, et non audivit ipsos.

The Prophet aggravates the wickedness of the king by this circumstance, that three men opposed him, though they thereby subjected themselves to great danger. They saw that the king was carried away by the violence of his temper ; and when he resisted God in a manner so insolent, what would he not have dared to do to them ? That they notwithstanding hesitated not to intercede with him, was an instance of great courage. But it hence appears, that as the king did not attend to their counsel, his impiety was extreme.

The particle וְגַם, *ugam*, is to be rendered *nevertheless*. Many interpreters have not attended here to what is emphatical, and have therefore perverted the meaning of the Prophet, or at least have extenuated it so as not to represent faithfully the object of the Prophet ; for there is, as I have said, a very emphatic exaggeration in the word *Nevertheless*. And let us learn from this passage, that when God draws us back from wicked designs, we are less excusable if we persevere in executing what he clearly shews ought not to be

sloth,—O grant, that we may not obstinately resist thee and thy word, but be so allured by thy condescension and subdued by thy threatenings, that in real fear we may flee to thy mercy, and never hope for any other remedy, except we obtain salvation through being reconciled to thee, and that we may so seek thee in true penitence and by true faith, that thou mayest come to our aid, and be propitious to us through thine only-begotten Son our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-Fourth.

27. Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, (after that the king had burnt the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah,) saying,

28. Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burnt.

27. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam postquam combusserat rex librum et sermones quos scripserat Baruch ex ore Jeremiæ, dicendo,

28. Conversus accipe tibi volumen aliud, et scribe in ipso cunctos sermones prioris, qui fuerunt in volumine priori, et quod combussit Joiakim rex Jehudah.

By these words the Prophet shews what the ungodly gain by contending against God; for however hard and refractory, they must necessarily be broken down by God's power. This happened to King Jehoiakim. We saw in yesterday's Lecture how furious he was when he cut and burned the volume, and also ordered the Prophet to be slain. But it now follows, that *another volume* was written.

Now God deals in different ways with the rebellious. For at one time he passes by or leaves them, when he sees that he spends in vain his labour in admonishing them. He then sends no more his Prophets to reprove or threaten, but silently executes his judgments. And for this reason it is said, "My Spirit shall no more contend with man, because he is flesh." (Gen. vi. 3.) And similar examples everywhere occur, that is, that when God saw that the prophetic doctrine was despised, he raised his hand against the ungodly, and at the same time ceased to speak to them. But here he purposed in a different way to break down the violence of Jehoiakim, for he caused *another volume* to be *written*. He foolishly thought that God's power was in a manner cut off, or extinguished by fire, because the book was reduced to

miah the prophet: but the Lord hid them.

ruch scribam et Jeremiam Prophetam; sed abscondit eos Jehova.

Here is described the madness of the king, which was so great, that he vented his rage against the Prophet and his scribe; and he chose no doubt those whom he thought to be most ready to obey him. He would have never taken such ministers as Elnathan or Delaiah or Gemariah, for he knew how much they abhorred such a nefarious deed; but he sent those whom he thought most adapted for such a service as that of killing Jeremiah and Baruch.

It is not improperly conjectured from this passage and a previous one, that Jeremiah was not detained in prison, but that he had been restrained by God from proclaiming his prophecies to the king and from reading them to the people. But as the word עָצוּר, *otsur*, is taken elsewhere for a captive or one bound, we may indeed draw a different conclusion. However, I will not contend on such a point. I have already explained what I most approve,—that Jeremiah was prohibited by a secret revelation, as Paul was forbidden to go to Bithynia. (Acts xvi. 7.) It is certainly not probable that he could escape from the king's prison, except it be said, that he was not so confined but that he thought himself free to escape when he saw that it was God's will, or that though Jeremiah would not have departed from prison, he yet privately escaped from the present rage of the king, because he was forced.

However this may have been, we ought to notice the words, that God *hid them*. Jeremiah no doubt accepted the counsel given to him, to take care of his life; he however now acknowledges that he had been preserved by God's kindness, as though he had said, that though there may be many ways by which we may escape from our present dangers, yet our life is in God's hand, so that he hides and conceals us; for we ourselves would run headlong unto death, were we not covered by the shadow of his hand. But the rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou dost daily invite us kindly to thyself, and dost also terrify us in order to correct our tardiness and

sloth,—O grant, that we may not obstinately resist thee and thy word, but be so allured by thy condescension and subdued by thy threatenings, that in real fear we may flee to thy mercy, and never hope for any other remedy, except we obtain salvation through being reconciled to thee, and that we may so seek thee in true penitence and by true faith, that thou mayest come to our aid, and be propitious to us through thine only-begotten Son our Lord.—Amen.

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ashes. But God shews that his word cannot be bound or restrained. Then he begins anew to threaten, not because he hoped for any benefit from this repetition, but because it was necessary to expose to ridicule the madness of the king, who had so presumptuously dared to despise both God and his holy Prophet.

The first thing then is, that the Prophet was bidden to *write another* roll, after the King Jehoiakim vented his rage against the roll read before him; and hence he carefully repeats the words, *Take to thee another roll, and write in it the same words which were in the first book;* as though he had said, "Let not a syllable be omitted, but let that which I once proclaimed by thy mouth, remain unchanged; and let thus all the ungodly know that thou hast faithfully delivered what thou didst receive from my mouth." It follows—

29. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast burnt this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?

30. Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost.

29. Et ad Joiakim regem Jehudah dices, Sic dicit Jehova, Tu combussisti librum hunc, dicendo, Quare scripsisti in ipso, dicendo, Veniendo veniet rex Babel (Babylonis,) et perdet ex ea hominem et animal (*vel*, bestiam?)

30. Propterea sic dixit Jehova ad Joiakim (*vel*, de Joiakim) regem Jehudah, Non erit ei qui succedat super solium Davidis, et cadaver ejus projectum erit in æstum per diem et in gelu per noctem.

We now see what reward Jehoiakim brought on himself, by his impiety and perverseness. But there are two clauses; in the first, God reproves him for having insolently dared to impose silence on the Prophet; and in the second, he adds a punishment.

Thou shalt say to Jehoiakim. We are to take עַל, *ol*, here for אֶל, *al*, as it appears from the context; it indeed properly means *concerning*, or *upon*, as in the next verse, God thus speaks *of* Jehoiakim. But as the Prophet is here bidden in the second person to address him, the other meaning, *to*, is better, even that he was bidden to address the king, and to address him by name: Then it is, "Thou shalt speak *to* Jehoiakim, the king of Judah." The word king, is

mentioned not so much for honour's sake, as to shew that he in vain gloried in honour, or in a title of dignity; for as we have elsewhere seen, the Prophet had been sent to reprove mountains and hills, and not to spare kings or kingdoms. (Micah vi. 1; Jer. i. 10.) It had then been said to him, "I have set thee over nations and kingdoms." As then Jehoiakim could not be so filled with pride as to think that everything was lawful to him, God intimates that there was no reason that royal splendour should dazzle his mind and his senses, for he made no account of such masks, and that no elevation in the world could intercept the course of prophetic truth. In a word, Jeremiah is here encouraged to persevere, lest the high position of the king should terrify him, or enervate his mind, so as not to declare faithfully the commands of God.

A twofold admonition may be hence gathered. The first belongs to kings, and to those who are great in wealth or power on the earth; they are warned to submit reverently to God's word, and not to think themselves exempted from what is common to all, or absolved, on account of their dignity, for God has no respect of persons. The other admonition belongs to teachers, and that is, that they are, with closed eyes, to do whatever God commands them, without shewing any respect of persons; and thus they are to fear no offences, nor even the name of a king, nor a drawn sword, nor any dangers.

The crime is in the first place mentioned, *Thou hast burnt the book, saying, Why hast thou written in it, By coming come shall the king of Babylon, and shall destroy this city.* Here God shews what especially was the reason why Jehoiakim cast the book into the fire, even because he could not endure the free reproofs and the threatenings contained in it. When God spares hypocrites, or does not touch their vices, they can bear prophetic teaching; but when the sore is touched, immediately they become angry; and this was the continual contest which God's Prophets had with the ungodly: for if they had flattered them and spoken smooth words to them, if they had always promised something joyful and prosperous to the ungodly, they would have been re-

ceived with great favour and applause; but the word of God was unpleasant and bitter; and it exasperated their minds when they heard that God was displeased and angry with them.

This passage then ought to be carefully noticed; for the Spirit of God points out, as by the finger, the fountain of all contumacy, even because hypocrites wish to agree or to make a covenant with God, that he should not deal severely with them, and that his Prophets should only speak smoothly. But it is necessary that God's word should correspond with the nature of its author. For, as God knows the heart, he penetrates into the inmost recesses; and so also his word is a two-edged sword, and thus it pierces men even to the very marrow, and discerns between the thoughts and the affections, as the Apostle teaches us. (Heb. iv. 12.) Hence it is, that hypocrites become mad, when God summons them to judgment. When any one handles gently a man full of ulcers, there is no sign of uneasiness given; but when a surgeon presses the ulcers, then he becomes irritated, and then also comes out what was before hidden. Similar is the case with hypocrites; for as it has been said, they do not clamour against God, nor even make any complaints, when the simple truth is declared; but when they are urged with reproofs and with threatenings, then their rage is kindled, then they manifest in every way their virulence. And this is set forth here, when the Prophet says, that the book was *burnt*, because it was *written in it* that the king of Babylon would come to *destroy* or lay waste the *land*, and to remove from it both *man and beast*.

So we see that the prophecy of Micah exasperated all the Jews, when he said that Jerusalem would be reduced into heaps of stones. (Micah iii. 12.)

But the Prophet immediately shews that the ungodly in vain resist God, when they kick against the goad; they must necessarily be torn in pieces by the stone with which they contend, because their hardness cannot hinder God from executing his judgments. It is therefore added, *Thus saith Jehovah of the King Jehoiakim, He shall have no one to succeed him on the throne of David.* By saying, that he

should have no successor, he means that he should have none of his own posterity; for though his son Jeconiah was made king in his stead, yet as he reigned only for three months, this short time was not counted. Then Jeremiah declares, by God's command, that King Jehoiakim should not have a legitimate successor, for his son Jeconiah was led into exile at the end of three months; and Zedekiah was not counted as a legitimate successor, because he was the uncle. And there is also no doubt but that Nebuchadnezzar, from ill-will and hatred, set him on the throne, for he thus raised him in order to degrade Jehoiakim and Jeconiah.

We now then perceive in what sense God threatened that there would be none to succeed King Jehoiakim; for it is not simply said, "There shall be none to sit on the throne of David;" but, "There shall be none to him," לֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ, *la ieie lu*, that is, "There shall be none of his children, or of his offspring, to succeed him on the throne of David." For the last king was Zedekiah, and he, as I have said, was the uncle; so that the whole royal seed were cast off, for no one after this time ever succeeded to the throne.

But it may be asked, How can this prophecy agree with the promise, that the posterity of David should continue as long as the sun and moon shone as faithful witnesses in the heavens? (Psalm lxxxix. 37, 38.) God had promised that the kingdom of David should be perpetual, and that there would be some of his posterity to rule as long as the sun and moon shone in the heavens; but what does our Prophet mean now, when he says, that there shall not be a successor? This is, indeed, to be confined to the posterity of Jehoiakim; but yet we must bear in mind what we have seen elsewhere, and that is, that he speaks here of an interruption, which is not inconsistent with perpetuity; for the perpetuity of the kingdom, promised to David, was such, that it was to fall and to be trodden under foot for a time, but that at length a stem from Jesse's root would rise, and that Christ, the only true and eternal David, would so reign, that his kingdom should have no end. When, therefore, the Prophets say, that there would be none to sit on David's throne, they do

not mean this strictly, but they thus refer only to that temporary punishment by which the throne was so overturned, that God at length would, in his own time, restore it, according to what Amos says, "For come shall the time when God shall raise up the fallen tabernacle of David." (Amos ix. 11.)

We now perceive in what sense hath stood firm the promise respecting the perpetuity of the kingdom, and that the kingdom had yet ceased for a time, that is, until Christ came, on whose head was placed the diadem, or the royal crown, as Ezekiel says. (Ezek. xxi. 26.) There is yet no doubt but this great inconsistency was made an objection to Jeremiah: "What! can it be that the throne of David should be without a legitimate heir? Canst thou draw down the sun and moon from the heavens?" In like manner, when the Prophets spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, they said: "What! Is it not said, 'This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell?' (Psalm cxxxii. 14.) Can it be that God will be without his habitation on earth, especially when he calls it his rest?" But the answer to all this was not difficult, even that God remained faithful to his promises, though his favour was, for a time, as it were, under a cloud, so that the dreadful desolation both of the city and of the kingdom might be an example to all.

There is no doubt, then, but that they shewed to the Prophet that the kingdom would be hid, as though it were a treasure concealed in the earth, and that still the time would come when God would again choose both the city and the kingdom, and restore them to their pristine dignity, as the Papists say, who boast in high terms of everything said in Scripture respecting the perpetual preservation of the Church: "Christ promises to be with his people to the end of the world, that he will be where two or three meet together in his name, that the Church is the pillar and ground of the truth." (Matt. xxviii. 20; xviii. 20; 1 Tim. iii. 15.) They heap together all these things, in order to shew that God is in a manner tied and bound to them. But we can easily dissipate these frivolous objections; for God does wonderfully and invisibly preserve his Church in the world; and then

the outward face of the Church does not always appear, but it is sometimes hid, and afterwards it emerges and recovers its own dignity, which, for a time, might seem to have been extinguished. Hence we give now the same answer to the Papists as the Prophets formerly did to the ancient people, —that God is a faithful preserver of his Church, but not according to the perception of the flesh, for the Church is in a wonderful manner sustained by God, and not in a common way, or as they say, according to the usual order of things.

He says that the *dead body of Jehoiakim would be cast out*, to be exposed to *the cold in the night*, and *to the heat in the day*. This might seem unimportant, like what we threaten children with, when we mention some phantoms to them; for what harm could it have been to Jehoiakim to have his dead body exposed to the cold in the night? for no injury or feeling of sorrow can happen to a dead body, as a dead man as to his body can have no feeling. It seems then that it is to little purpose that the Prophet says, that his dead body would be exposed to the heat in the day, and to the cold at night. But this is to be referred to the common law of nature, of which we have spoken elsewhere; for it is a sad and disgraceful thing, nay, a horrid spectacle, when we see men unburied; and the duty of burying the dead has from the beginning been acknowledged, and burial is an evidence of a future resurrection, as it has been before stated. When, therefore, the body of man lies unburied, all men shun and dread the sight; and then when the body gets rigid through cold, and becomes putrid through the heat of the day, the indignity becomes still greater. God then intended to set forth the degradation that awaited Jehoiakim, not that any hurt could be done to him when his body was cast out, and not honoured with a burial, but that it would be an evidence of God's vengeance, when a king was thus cast out as an ass or a dog, according to what we have seen elsewhere, "With the burial of an ass shall he be buried," that is, he will be deemed unworthy of common honour; for as it falls to the lot of the lowest of men to find a pit where their bodies lie buried, it was a rare and unusual proof of God's vengeance, that a king should lie exposed as a prey to birds

and wild beasts. We know what Jehu said of Jezebel, "Let her be buried, for she is a king's daughter." (2 Kings ix. 34.) She was worthy to be torn to pieces a hundred times. She had been cast out from a chamber, and the dogs licked her blood; yet an enemy ordered her to be buried—and why? because she was a king's daughter, or descended from a royal family, (1 Kings xxi. 23:) then, he said, let her be buried.

We now then understand the meaning of the Prophet, or rather of the Holy Spirit, that it would be a remarkable proof of God's vengeance, when the body of King Jehoiakim should be exposed at night to the cold, and in the day to the heat. This has also happened sometimes to the saints, as we have before said; but it was a temporal punishment common to the good and to the bad. We ought yet always to consider it as God's judgment. When a godly man is left without burial, we must know that all things happen for good to God's children, according to what Paul says, whether it be life or death, it is for their salvation. (Rom. viii. 28.) But when God gives a remarkable proof of his wrath against an ungodly man, our eyes ought to be opened; for it is not right to be blind to the manifest judgments of God; for it is not in vain that Paul reminds us that God's judgment will come on the ungodly; but he would have us carefully to consider how God punishes the reprobate in life and in death and even after death. It follows—

31. And I will punish him, and his seed, and his servants, for their iniquity: and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them: but they hearkened not.

31. Et visitabo super eum et super semen ejus, et super servos ejus iniquitatem eorum, et evenire faciam illis (super eos, *ad verbum,*) et super habitatores Jerusalem, et super virum Jehudah omne malum quod pronuntiavi adversus eos, et non audierunt.

Here a reason is given for what the former verse contains; for if the Prophet had only said, that the dead body of the king would remain unburied and cast out in dishonour to be exposed in the night to the cold and in the day to the heat, the narrative would not have produced the effect intended; but God shews here the cause, which was this, that he had

forewarned King Jehoiakim and all his counsellors, (called here servants,) and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all the Jews universally: as then they had been in due time clearly told what calamity was near at hand, and yet no one had repented, for this so great an obstinacy God says now that he would take vengeance, *I will visit him and his seed and the whole people for their iniquity*—what was the iniquity? even that they had so grievously and in so many ways provoked God, and had not returned to a sound mind, though reproved by the Prophet, but had become more and more hardened.

The extremity of their iniquity the Prophet thus points out, because they *hearkened not* to the threatenings, by which God had endeavoured to rescue them from the coming ruin: for there would have been some hope of deliverance, had they deprecated God's wrath; but as his threatenings had been despised, it was, as I have said, an extreme iniquity. And we see elsewhere how much God abominates this diabolical presumption of men, "I have called to sackcloth and ashes; but ye have called to the harp and to joy, and have said, 'Let us feast and drink, for to-morrow we shall die:' as I live, this iniquity shall not be blotted out." (Is. xxii. 12, 13.) God swore by himself, that this sin should not be expiated, for the Jews repented not when he kindly invited them to himself, and declared to them that they could not escape extreme punishment. It is therefore no wonder that God in this place also represents their obstinate wickedness as being the greatest, the Jews having *not hearkened to* the reproofs conveyed to them by the mouth of Jeremiah. It follows—

32. Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein, from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.

32. Et (tunc) Jeremias scripsit volumen aliud, et dedit Baruch filio Neriæ, qui scripsit in ipso ex ore Jeremiæ cunctos sermones libri, quem combusserat Joiakim rex Jehudah igne, et adhuc additi sunt cum illis sermones multi similes illis.

Here the Prophet tells us that he faithfully obeyed God in writing another volume; and his constancy in this affair

deserves no common praise; for he had lately fled in fear, he knew that the king was his enemy, as he had already ordered him and Baruch to be slain. As then he knew that the king burned with so much rage and hatred, how came he to be so bold as to exasperate him still more? But we see that the Prophets were not exempt from the influence of fear, and were often anxious about their own safety; and yet they ever preferred the duty imposed on them by God to their own life. The Prophet, no doubt, trembled, but as he felt bound to obey God's command, he disregarded his own life, when he had to make the choice, whether to refuse the burden laid on him, or to provide for his own safety. Thus then he offered his own life as a sacrifice, though he was not free from fear and other infirmities. This is one thing.

But Baruch, I doubt not, again proclaimed these words; how was it then that the king abstained from cruelty? Had his madness been by any means mitigated? It is certain that he did not become changed, and that he did not through kindness spare God's servants; but God restrained his cruelty; for when it is not his will to soften the hearts of the ungodly, he yet bridles their violence, so that they either dare not, or cannot find the way, to execute with their hands what they have intended in their minds, however much they may strive to do so. I therefore consider that the King Jehoiakim was restrained by the hidden power of God, so that he could not do any harm to Jeremiah and his scribe Baruch; and that in the meantime the magnanimity of the Prophet and also of his scribe remained invincible; for it was God's will to fight as it were hand to hand, with this impious king, until he was ignominiously cast from his throne, which happened, as we shall see, soon after.

PRAYER.

Grant, Omnipotent God, that since thou warnest us by so remarkable examples, that the ungodly by obstinately resisting thee, do nothing but aggravate their own ruin,—O grant, that we may receive with meek hearts the admonitions of thy Prophets, and submit to thee, and be so humbled by thy threatenings and tremble at thy word, that being touched with the feeling of true repentance, and reconciled to thee by faith, we may find thee to

be the best and the kindest Father to obedient children, until we shall at length enjoy that eternal inheritance which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Fifth.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1. And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah.

2. But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the Lord, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah.

1. Et regnavit rex Zedechias, filius Josiæ, pro Choniah (Jechania) filio Joiakim, quem constituit regem Nebuchadnezer, rex Babylonis, in terra Jehudah:

2. Et non audivit, neque servi ejus, neque populus terræ sermones Jehovæ, quos loquutus est per manum Jeremiæ Prophetæ.

The Prophet tells us here, that after Jeconiah the king had been led into exile, the Jews had not on that account repented, though God had as it were forced them to return to him; for it was so severe a chastisement, that to become worse was an evidence of monstrous stupidity. Jeremiah, however, says that they were not reformed by that punishment; for Zedekiah, who had succeeded Jeconiah, rejected sound doctrine, and did not obey the counsel of the Prophet.

But we must bear in mind the history of that time, that we may understand the meaning of the Prophet: the Jews made Jeconiah king in the place of his father, but in the third month the army of the king of Babylon came. Then Jeconiah surrendered himself to them of his own accord. Now the Prophet had said, that there would be no legitimate successor to Jehoiakim; and this was fulfilled, though his son was set on the throne, for a three months' reign was so unimportant that it was deemed as nothing. And when Nebuchadnezzar saw that the people could hardly be kept in order without a king, he made Mattaniah king, whom he called Zedekiah. And he immediately revolted to the Egyptians and made a treaty with them, in order that he might shake off the yoke of the king of Babylon. Hence the Prophet says, that though Zedekiah had been taught by the example of Jehoiakim and of his nephew Jeconiah, he yet

became nothing the better. He does not simply blame his ingratitude: it is indeed certain that he had been severely reproved by the Prophet for having acted perfidiously towards the King Nebuchadnezzar, for he ought to have kept faith with him to the last. He feigned a reason of his own for revolting from him; no new cause had occurred; but it was only that he might be exempt from tribute, and also lest the malevolent should object to him that he reigned by permission, and that he was the slave of another king. As, then, he saw that his reign would be exposed to many reproaches, except he revolted from the king of Babylon, he made a treaty with the Egyptians. This deserved reproof: but the Prophet speaks here generally of his obstinate wickedness, and also of that of the whole people.

King Zedekiah, he says, *the son of Josiah, reigned instead of Coniah.* Here the word, Jeconiah, is curtailed, as it is probable, for the sake of degrading him; and we have seen that this has been the common opinion. He is then called Coniah by way of reproach, when yet his full name was Jeconiah. He says that Zedekiah was *made king by Nebuchadnezzar:* hence his perfidy and ingratitude became manifest. It is added, that he *hearkened not to the word of Jehovah, nor his servants, nor his people.* I have said that Zedekiah was condemned, not simply because he obeyed not the Prophet by keeping faith with the King Nebuchadnezzar, but also because he retained the superstitions of his fathers, and corrupted the true worship of God, and would not be called back to the doctrine of the Law.

The disobedience then, mentioned here, extended to the whole Law of God, or to the two tables; for the Jews had then become degenerate together with their king; they did not purely worship God, but polluted themselves and the Temple by impious and filthy superstitions, and they were also libidinous, avaricious, cruel, violent, and dishonest, and had thus cast off the whole teaching of the Law. And this was a proof of strange blindness, as they had before their eyes the calamities of the city and the reproach to which their king had been subjected; for as we have already said, his sons had been slain in his presence, his own eyes had been

pulled out, and he was bound with chains, after having been judged guilty of a capital offence. Such an example ought surely to have terrified Zedekiah and all the rest, so as to make them at length wise, and to seek reconciliation with God. But the Prophet says, that they *did not hearken to the word of Jehovah.*

He mentions the king, then his counsellors, and in the third place, the whole people; as though he had said, that this madness was found not only in the king, but also in his counsellors and in the whole community, so that no one was excusable. He then begins with the head, even the king himself, and shews also that his counsellors were nothing better, and afterwards adds the common people, in whom the fault seems to have been less; for we know that the lower orders go astray through want of wisdom and ignorance. But the Prophet here shews that even the lowest of the people were disobedient to God.

We ought to notice especially the words, that they *hearkened not to the word of Jehovah which he had spoken by Jeremiah.* For he intimates, that though God did not appear from heaven, it was sufficient to condemn the unbelieving, that he spoke by his Prophets. There was, then, no reason why the wicked should make evasions and say, that it was not their purpose to reject God and his doctrine, but that they only refused deference to mortals, and would not regard the words of men as heavenly oracles. This evasion availed them nothing, for God would have them to hearken to his servants. Though he did not shew himself from heaven, nor addressed them in a visible form, it was yet enough that he had once for all testified, that after the promulgation of the Law, there would always be Prophets among the people, and had commanded them to be reverently attended to. Nor could the Jews avail themselves of that evasion, which the ungodly commonly resorted to, that they could not distinguish between true and false Prophets; for if they had examined the doctrine of Jeremiah, they would have found that it had certain marks by which they could have easily seen that it was altogether consistent with the Law. That they then rejected the Prophet and his heavenly

doctrine, was a proof of their obstinacy and contempt, but not through ignorance. It follows,—

3. And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the Lord our God for us.

4. Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people; for they had not put him into prison.

5. Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

6. Then came the word of the Lord unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying,

7. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land.

8. And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

3. Et misit rex Zedechias Jucal filium Selemiæ, et Zephaniam filium Maassiæ sacerdotem (*vel*, sacerdotis) ad Jeremiam Prophetam, dicendo, Ora agedum pro nobis Jehovam Deum nostrum.

4. Et Jeremias (autem) ibat et egrediebatur in medio populi; necdum posuerant eum in domum clausuræ (*vel*, carceris.)

5. Et exercitus Pharaonis egressus erat ex Egypto, et audierant Chaldæi qui oppugnabant Jerusalem famam de illis, et ascenderant a Jerusalem.

6. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam Prophetam, dicendo,

7. Sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel, Ita dicetis regi Jehudah, qui misit vos ad me ut me interrogaretis, Ecce exercitus Pharaonis, qui egressus est vobis in auxilium, reversus est (revertatur, *potius*) in terram Egypti;

8. Et redibunt Chaldæi et oppugnabunt hanc urbem (prœliabuntur contra urbem hanc) et capient eam et comburent eam igni.

Jeremiah had briefly explained what was the state of the city and the land, that though they had been already severely chastised by God's scourges, they yet remained obstinate in their wickedness. He now adds, that messengers were *sent* to him by *King Zedekiah*, when danger arose from the Chaldeans; and it is probable that this message came to Jeremiah when the siege was raised, or if the siege still continued, it was at a time when the Jews, no doubt, flattered themselves with the hope of receiving some aid, while yet they saw that the power of the king of Babylon was very great. For though they hoped for some help from the Egyptians, they were yet perplexed, and fear constrained the king to send messengers to the Prophet Jeremiah. But it appears from the answer that the Egyptians were already in arms, and had also come out for the purpose of raising the siege, and driving the Chaldeans from Judea. We hence see that the king was, in

a measure, elated with vain confidence, seeing that the Egyptians were coming with a strong army to assist him, and yet he was full of anxiety, as the ungodly must ever be: while they seek to confirm themselves in a state of security, they are still tossed here and there, for God's judgment is upon them. They are fearful, though they try to shake off fear. Hence Zedekiah, though he thought that he should soon be freed from all danger, yet could not wholly divest himself of anxiety, and therefore sent to Jeremiah: for the ungodly are wont to seek God, but not in earnest; they wish to discharge the outward duty, but they bring neither faith nor repentance, by which alone access to God is opened.

But Jeremiah tells us that he was then at liberty, coming in and going out *among the people*. It may be that he had been in prison, but that after the rage of the king and of the people had cooled, he might have been set free. It is hence said that he was among the people, that is set at liberty, and at his own disposal, so that he could safely walk through the city; for to come and to go implies that he was free to follow his own business. He is said to come and to go who undertakes this or that concern as he pleases; for men, we know, are not engaged always in the same thing, but do various things as necessity requires. Such, then, was the condition of Jeremiah; he enjoyed common liberty. It is then added, that he *was not as yet cast into prison*, as it happened soon after. It is further said, that the *army of Pharaoh was come out from Egypt* to give aid to the Jews, and that thus the siege was raised, for the Chaldeans went forth to meet the Egyptians. At this time, then, Jeremiah received an answer from God. It seems not, therefore, probable that the messengers were sent, when the report spread through the city of the coming of the enemy, but rather when the city was relieved, for the condition of the people was still doubtful, as the liberty of the city and the land depended on the uncertain issue of the war. The Chaldeans had not yet come unto an engagement with the Egyptians. A victory gained by Pharaoh would have given the prospect of peace and safety to Zedekiah and the whole people; but if the Chaldeans gained the day, they saw that the greatest

danger was at hand, for they would then be deprived of every assistance.

It was in this state of things that Zedekiah sent messengers to Jeremiah, to solicit his prayers. Thus we see that hypocrites are driven by the fear of God, whom yet they proudly despise, to seek his aid when forced to do so; nor is this done, that they may appear to do so before men, but because God brings them to such straits, that they cannot but feel that they stand in need of his help. They wish, indeed, as I have said, to obliterate every recollection of God, and were they also able to do so, they would rob him of all power and authority; but as they are forced, willing or unwilling, to know that God so reigns in heaven that the whole world is subject to his power, necessity constrains them formally to pray, and, in a manner, to conciliate his favour, or, at least, to try to do so. But as I have already said, they ought to begin with repentance and faith. Hypocrites withdraw themselves as far as they can, both from the promises of God and from the duty of repentance. They so seek God that they at the same time shun him.

We must also observe, that Zedekiah felt himself so guilty, that he could not pray himself. As, then, he was conscious of his own unworthiness, he put the Prophet, as it were, between himself and God, that he might suppliantly intercede for him. This also is what the faithful often do, for they seek aid here and there that they may be more readily heard by God; and this they do according to God's command. But there is a great difference between the godly and hypocrites. The true worshippers of God, as I have said, are not content with their own prayers, but ask others to join them, while, at the same time, they pray God themselves. But hypocrites, what do they do? As they think that an access is forbidden them, and know that they are unworthy of being heard by God, they substitute others in their place to pray for them. Thus they do not seek themselves to know whether God will be propitious to them; and though they wish the whole world to pray for them, they do not yet pray themselves. Such, then, was the sottishness of Zedekiah, who asked the holy Prophet to

pray for him to God, while he himself was lying torpid in his own dregs ; for he did not acknowledge that he was suffering a just punishment, nor had he recourse to the true remedy, that is, to return to God's favour, to embrace his mercy and the promises of salvation. All these principal things he omitted, and only attended to what is, as they say, accessory.

Now as to the time, we ought carefully to notice that it was when the Egyptians came to raise the siege. Thus God for a time permitted hypocrites to be deceived by a fortunate event ; for the Jews then began to praise their own prudence in forming a league with the Egyptians, for that kingdom, as it is well known, was powerful, and at the same time populous, so that a large army could be raised. As, then, they saw that their treaty turned out beneficially to them, they, no doubt, assumed to themselves great credit, and thus their boldness increased. But God, however, so touched their hearts, that they continued in suspense, and, by turns, greatly feared : for Zedekiah would not have sent to Jeremiah, except constrained by some great necessity ; and yet, as it has been said, success might have inebriated him ; but God rendered him anxious, so as to feel that the prayer of the Prophet was needed.

Now follows the answer : Jeremiah says that the word of Jehovah came to him, and that he was to tell the messengers of Zedekiah, that the Chaldeans would shortly return. He then says, *Behold the army of Pharaoh, which has come forth to deliver you, shall return to their own land ;* that is, being compelled to do so, the Egyptians being either conquered in battle or smitten with fear, and returning of their own accord to secure themselves in their own cities. The Prophet says, that no advantage could be expected from the Egyptians, for the soldiers of Pharaoh would return to their own land ; and then he adds, *and the Chaldeans shall return and fight against this city, until they take and burn it.* This was a hard answer, and Zedekiah was, no doubt, greatly exasperated at hearing the message, and also very angry with the Prophet, who thus dared plainly to threaten the city and the people with final ruin. But here the Prophet disregarded the pride of the king, for it was necessary for

miserable would be the condition of God's servants, were he not to sustain them by the power of his Spirit. For here is a holy Prophet overwhelmed with unjust accusations and also reproaches, and the princes abstained not from stripes, and at last he was cast into a pit. Whenever, then, such a thing happens to us, let us cast our eyes on Jeremiah, and let it not be grievous to us to follow the steps of the holy Prophet; nor let us think it hard to endure the trials with which God was pleased to exercise him. They *put him*, he says, *in the house*, and then the word is changed, *the prison*, האסור, *easur*, but the same thing is meant. It now follows what sort of prison it was—

16. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days.

16. Et quo venit Jeremias in domum lacus, et ad mansiones, et sedit ibi Jeremias diebus multis.

The particle כי, *ki*, is to be taken here as an adverb of time, as I think, though interpreters have not observed this, *When Jeremiah*, he says, *came into the house of the pit* or dungeon, or of the prison. The word בור, *bur*, means also sometimes the grave, but is to be taken here for a pit or a deep place: he means that it was a dark and filthy prison. And he adds, *and to the dwellings*. I know not why some have rendered it, "victualling houses;" for the word החניות, *echeniot*, means narrow prisons, which we call at this day *cachots*:[1] he was therefore cast into a dungeon, where there were narrow places, that the holy man had no space either freely to rise or to stand or to sit down, or to lie down. Then the Prophet shews that he was so confined by the straitness of the place, that he could hardly sit or lay down or stand erect; and he says that he was there many days.[2]

[1] The versions and the *Targ.* render the word differently; its meaning was not evidently understood. *Blayney* gives the best explanation, who renders it "cells." "The dungeon," he says, was a deep pit like a well, and near the bottom were scooped niches, or cells, for the lodgement of the prisoners. The word comes from חנה, to fix, to settle, to lodge; hence the plural noun here means places for prisoners to settle or lodge on, where they could fix themselves, without sinking in the mire at the bottom of the pit, as the case was with Jeremiah on another occasion. See ch. xxxviii. 6. That pit, it seems, had no cells.—*Ed.*

[2] This paragraph is intermingled in the original with the text; but it has been thought better to introduce it separately.—*Ed.*

ing, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart.

10. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained *but* wounded men among them, *yet* should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.

piatis, *quia duæ sunt lectiones,* השאו *aut* השיאו, Ne *ergo* efferatis vos, *vel,* Ne decipiatis animas vestras) dicendo, Proficiscendo proficiscentur Chaldæi, quia non proficiscentur:

10. Quia si percusseritis totum exercitum Chaldæorum, qui præliantur vobiscum (*vel,* qui vos oppugnant,) et residui fuerint ex illis viri transfixi (*hoc est,* vulnerati) quisque e tabernaculo suo consurgent (*hoc est,* singuli ex tabernaculo suo,) et exurent hanc urbem igni.

The Prophet confirms the former verse, and it was indeed necessary that this should be added, for though Zedekiah might not have divested himself of all anxiety and fear, he must yet have been moved by that prophecy, and thus he might have become more hardened in his obduracy, as it is the case with hypocrites; who, when they find that they can gain nothing, become furious against God, and run on headlong in their course. This might then have been the case with Zedekiah and also the Jews; hence Jeremiah adds, by way of confirmation, *Elate not your hearts,* or, Deceive not yourselves; that is, on account of the report respecting the Egyptian army. Thus he told the Jews that they had no reason to expect any alleviation. And the reason is added, *For if,* he says, *ye had smitten the Chaldeans,* so that few remained, *yet they would rise up every one from his tent, and burn this city.*

The Prophet shews how foolishly and absurdly the Jews acted, in casting their eyes on fortunate events, and thus forming their opinions. He therefore exhorts them to cease to rely on such a confidence as would deceive them; for he says, that though they gained many battles, and the war turned on their side, yet they could not escape final ruin, for they had to do with God. It was hence the same thing, as though he had said, that they were not to judge by their state at that time, as to what it would be, because God was at war with them; and therefore if God had resolved to destroy them, though there were no enemy, yet he could by one breath slay them all. And for the same reason he concludes that he could employ the Chaldeans, *Though few in number*

him to obey God's command. He therefore boldly performed his office; and, at the same time, he touched the king Zedekiah to the quick, *say to the king who sent you to inquire of me*, &c.

The word דרש, *daresh*, means indeed to ask in general, but the Prophet means here that he was to inquire; and yet this was not said before; for he only told us that messengers had been sent to ask him to pray for the safety of the king and the people. But Scripture, we know, often omits one of the two things that are included; and we may easily conclude, that the king had not only sent to Jeremiah to pray, but also to bring some favourable prophecy from the Lord. For why did he apply to him rather than to the chief priest or some others, except that he knew him to be the true Prophet of God? Then Zedekiah requested Jeremiah to pray, but he tried also to draw from him some favourable prophecy, by which he might be relieved. Hence Jeremiah indirectly reproved him, because he feignedly sent to him as though he was ready to hear whatever God might declare by the mouth of his servant,—"He sent you to inquire of me; he is mistaken, for he will not get what he seeks; for thus saith God, 'The Egyptians shall avail you nothing, and the Chaldeans shall return and take and burn the city.'"

We now perceive that when hypocrites pretend in a circuitous way to seek God, they do not obtain what they wish; for God justly disappoints them, inasmuch as they do not come to him with sincere hearts and desires; for they wish to transform God into their own nature and character, and they bend not themselves to his service nor submit to his word. Thus it comes that God will not answer their prayers; but the faithful, who seek God sincerely and from the heart, always find him propitious; and though he may not hear them immediately, yet he really shews that he cares for their safety. But hypocrites, whose confidence God regards with disdain, deserve that it should be empty and vain. This, then, is the reason why the Prophet gave such a severe answer to Zedekiah and his messengers. It now follows,—

9. Thus saith the Lord, Deceive not yourselves, say-

9. Sic dicit Jehova, Ne efferatis animas vestras (*vel, cum puncto diverso,* Ne deci-

ing, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart.

10. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained *but* wounded men among them, *yet* should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.

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remained, and even wounded, yet they would *rise up from their tents,* and set the buildings of Jerusalem on fire. This city, therefore, shall be burnt; ask not by whom or when: God will in this work employ the Chaldeans, for he hath so determined.

We may hence conclude, that the Jews had been for a time victorious, at least had successfully repelled their enemies in their attacks on the city; for the Prophet would not have said this, had he not seen that the Jews entertained hope of deliverance on account of some success they had in the war. He therefore says, that all this was of no importance, for their city was to perish by fire. But the principle which I have mentioned must be borne in mind, for Jeremiah took it as granted that the destruction of the city Jerusalem was not to be effected by the forces of the King Nebuchadnezzar, neither by the power or number of his army, nor by the valour of his soldiers, but by the judgment of God. Since it is so, he says, *though few remained, and they wounded,* even lying as half dead, *yet they will rise up every one from his tent,* that is, not together, nor in a regular order, nor under a banner, as soldiers are wont to do, but each one, though no comrade were near, though scattered here and there, would yet rise up from his tent. He intimates, in short, that though the contest were only with shadows, they yet could not escape that extreme vengeance which God had threatened. Hence he says, *they shall rise up every one from his tent, and burn this city.*

Now he says not that the Chaldeans would take possession of the city, he speaks not of the assault, but only of the burning. He hence intimates, that though the Chaldeans might have in themselves no power to hurt them, yet it was sufficient that they were armed by God, for the purpose of setting fire to the houses, like women and children, who often burn whole cities and villages; for in this case there is no need of valour or of any great skill. So then God declares, that though the Chaldeans might not be prepared to fight, yet they were strong enough, yea, even though they were lying down and half-dead after having been wounded. This is the meaning.

PRAYER.

Grant, omnipotent God, that as thou hast been pleased kindly to invite us to thyself, and settest before us the reconciliation which is through thine only-begotten Son,—O grant, that we may not proceed in our wickedness so as to provoke thee more and more against us, and to kindle the fire of thy vengeance on our own heads, but that we may so submit ourselves to thee, as to flee in sincere repentance and true faith to thy mercy, that we may find thee to be propitious to us, and that thou mayest thus afford us reason to give glory to thy name, having shewn mercy to us, through the same, thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-Sixth.

11. And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army,

12. Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people.

13. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward *was* there, whose name *was* Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans.

14. Then said Jeremiah, *It is* false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans. But he hearkened not to him: so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes.

11. Et accidit postquam ascenderat exercitus Chaldæorum ab Jerosolyma propter exercitum Pharaonis;

12. Tunc egressus est Jeremias Jerosolyma, ut proficisceretur in terram Benjamin, ut divideret illinc in medio populi.

13. Quum esset in porta Benjamin, illic erat magister custodiæ, cujus nomen Iiria, filius Selemiæ, filii Chananiæ, qui apprehendit Jeremiam Prophetam, dicendo, Ad Chaldæos tu cadis (*aut*, dilaberis, *hoc enim* significat verbum נפל.)

14. Et dixit Jeremias, Mendacium, non dilabor ad Chaldæos; sed non audivit eum, et apprehendit Iiria Jeremiam, et deduxit eum ad principes.

Here Jeremiah tells us how, and on what occasion, he was cast into prison. He had said shortly before, that he was in the middle of the people, or among them; but now he gives an account of the cruelty of the princes, that they not only cast him into prison, but even into a grave, for they put him, as we shall see, in a dungeon, so that it was a miracle that he did not die there; and this was not done only once; but we shall hereafter see, before the end of the chapter, that he was unhumanly treated, so that he was afraid to return to the same place, lest it should prove fatal

to him. He mentions the time when this was done, that is, when the Chaldean army went forth to meet the Egyptians. He was then free to leave the city: no one before could have gone out, because the gates were closed, and the city was also surrounded by enemies. It was then, he says, that he went out, that he might go to *the land of Benjamin*, where, as it has elsewhere appeared, he was born.

But he then adds, that he was intercepted by the *prefect of the ward in the gate of Benjamin*. That gate had its name from its situation, for a part of Jerusalem belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; and hence it was not strange that the gate which led to the heritage of the tribe of Benjamin was so called. There then was Jeremiah intercepted by Irijah, the prefect of the ward, and not without a grievous charge, that he was escaping to the Chaldeans. The Prophet attempted to clear himself, but with no effect; for an opinion had prevailed, that he was already in league with the enemies. He thus gained nothing by defending himself, but was taken to the princes, the king's counsellors.

This passage teaches us that God's servants cannot escape without being exposed to many calumnies and false suspicions. Jeremiah might at the beginning have evaded this, and according to the perception of the flesh, his exemption or immunity might have been viewed as lawful, for there was now before his eyes the danger, not only of losing his life, but also of his name and reputation, which, to ingenuous and wise men, is of much more value. Had Jeremiah then chosen to evade, he might have made this pretence,—"I am indeed ready to offer my life as a sacrifice a hundred times, but what will it avail me, if I am to be regarded as a revolter?" For he must have thus exposed the very name of God to many blasphemies: they might have said, "This is the Prophet who boasted that he had been sent from above, but he is now become perfidious and a traitor to his own country, and has tried to deliver up the city into the hands of enemies." Jeremiah then might have shaken off this burden laid on him; but it was necessary for him to bear this reproach, with which he was falsely charged. Faithful teachers ought indeed to remove, as far as they can, all

calumnies, and to check the wicked and malicious, so that they may not have the occasion to speak evil; but when they have done all, they will not yet exempt themselves from calumny; for their words and their deeds will be misconstrued. Thus Jeremiah was loaded with false charges; for all had persuaded themselves, that as he had so much extolled the power of King Nebuchadnezzar, he had been hired by him for the purpose of depressing the people by fear; and it may be that the violent among them did wilfully and knowingly make his case to appear worse to the ignorant, even by false reports. As then this conviction respecting him prevailed everywhere, he was apprehended as a revolter, as he was going out of the city.

But he says, that he intended to go *into the land of Benjamin*, so as to *separate* himself. The verb חלק, *chelak*, means to divide, to scatter, to dissipate; and hence some have given this meaning, that he went into the land of Benjamin in order to divide his heritage; but this seems harsh and forced. They add, "In the midst of the people," as though Jeremiah wished to make his land common, and to give it to the people: but in this explanation there is nothing probable or suitable. I therefore doubt not but that Jeremiah sought this as a quiet place, as it is understood by most interpreters. He then *went forth towards the land of Benjamin, that he might separate himself;* that is, that he might be secluded there in the midst of his people. It is, indeed, a brief mode of speaking, but the meaning is not ambiguous,—*that he might be there*, where he might separate himself from the people, as the places were distant from one another.[1] For he was tired with the city, because he saw

[1] The idea of trafficking or buying is given by the *Sept.*, "to buy thence in the midst of the people." The *Vulg.* is, "that he might divide there *his* possession in the sight of the citizens;" and materially the same meaning is given by the *Syr.* and the *Targ.* The literal rendering is, "For a portion from thence (or, there) among the people;" which seems to mean, that he intended to go to the land of Benjamin, that he might get his portion or share from the inheritance he had among his people. So that *Blayney's* version appears to be right, "to receive a portion thereof among the people." The Chaldeans had deprived him of his patrimony in the land of Benjamin: when they retreated he purposed to go there, "with the view," as *Blayney* observes, "of coming in for a share of the produce of the land with the rest of his neighbours."—*Ed.*

that he spent his labour in vain. Some think that he was afraid of being cast into prison, because he had just announced a command greatly disliked; but it is more probable that he was worn out with weariness, because he saw that he made no impression on men so hard and refractory. Hence then it was, that he wished to withdraw from the presence of the whole people.

Then follows what we have already mentioned, that he was *taken in the gate by the keeper Irijah*, as though he were revolting to the Chaldeans. We have stated how this suspicion arose, even because he had faithfully proclaimed the commands of God. We hence see how God tried his servant, when he thus constrained him to speak, so that his words became suspected. And hence also we may gather how thoroughly fixed in the minds of men was that false opinion, for Jeremiah was not heard in his own defence. He indeed said openly that he was not fleeing away, nay, that this was a false charge. *It is a lie*, he says, *I am not fleeing to the Chaldeans.*

I have already reminded you that the verb נפל, ***nuphal***, found here, means properly to fall, but it is to be taken here metaphorically, as signifying to fall away, or to incline to another side. *Thou* then *fallest away* or inclinest *to the Chaldeans*, which was the same thing as to revolt. We see that the Prophet was not charged with a common offence, for it would have been the highest to forsake his own country and to pass over to the enemies: it would have been better for him to die a hundred deaths. But, as I have already said, the servants of God ought to be so courageous as to despise the slanders of the unprincipled, and, when it so pleases God, to prepare themselves for patience whenever any reproach is to be undergone, only let their conscience be always clear before God and angels; and let also their integrity confute all slanders, and let them disprove them too, provided there be those who can bear to hear them: but if a defence be not always admitted, let them patiently bear this indignity. And this also we ought to notice, that God's servants, though ready to clear themselves of crimes ascribed to them, and to defend their innocence at the peril of life, are yet often re-

pelled and condemned unheard. This is, indeed, a great indignity; but yet as Jeremiah met with such a treatment, it ought not at this day to appear to us unendurable or new. It now follows—

15. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison, in the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made that the prison.

15. Et ebullierunt (iracundia) principes (*nam* קָצַף *hoc significat, vel,* efferbuerunt principes) contra Jeremiam, et percusserunt eum (*alii vertunt transitive,* percutere fecerunt, *sed proprie est percutere, vel verberare,* percusserunt *ergo* eum,) et posuerunt ipsum in domum carceris, in domum Jonathan scribæ, quia ipsam fecerant (*id est,* constituerant) in domum carceris.

Here Jeremiah pursues the same narrative, and shews how unjustly he was treated, for he found no equity at the hands of the princes any more than in the keeper of the ward. He was no doubt prepared to defend himself before them, and sufficient proof was ready at hand, only he would have had to speak to the deaf. But here he shews by one word that the liberty of speaking was precluded, for a furious madness seized them that they would not hear him. And here we may notice how much opposed is wrath to just and peaceable decisions; for if we wish to be right and equitable judges, self-government is especially necessary. When, therefore, our minds are inflamed with anger or wrath, it is impossible that any rectitude or humanity should prevail. So Jeremiah complains that he was oppressed, because the princes boiled with rage, so that they suffered him not to give the explanation which he had prepared.

He then adds, that they *smote him.* They no doubt ordered their servants to smite him; for it would have been more than strange, had the princes themselves risen up to strike the Prophet with their fists, or to smite him with their hands. It is then probable that he was smitten by their orders and at their bidding. This is the reason, if I mistake not, why some have given this rendering, "They caused him to be smitten." But he is often said to have killed a man, who has ordered him to be killed, while he himself had not touched him with his finger. Even so Jeremiah was smitten by the princes, because they had commanded him to be smitten. And this passage shews also, as in a glass, how

miserable would be the condition of God's servants, were he not to sustain them by the power of his Spirit. For here is a holy Prophet overwhelmed with unjust accusations and also reproaches, and the princes abstained not from stripes, and at last he was cast into a pit. Whenever, then, such a thing happens to us, let us cast our eyes on Jeremiah, and let it not be grievous to us to follow the steps of the holy Prophet; nor let us think it hard to endure the trials with which God was pleased to exercise him. They *put him*, he says, *in the house*, and then the word is changed, *the prison*, האסור, *easur*, but the same thing is meant. It now follows what sort of prison it was—

16. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days.

16. Et quo venit Jeremias in domum lacus, et ad mansiones, et sedit ibi Jeremias diebus multis.

The particle כי, *ki*, is to be taken here as an adverb of time, as I think, though interpreters have not observed this, *When Jeremiah*, he says, *came into the house of the pit* or dungeon, or of the prison. The word בור, *bur*, means also sometimes the grave, but is to be taken here for a pit or a deep place: he means that it was a dark and filthy prison. And he adds, *and to the dwellings*. I know not why some have rendered it, "victualling houses;" for the word החניות, *echeniot*, means narrow prisons, which we call at this day *cachots*:[1] he was therefore cast into a dungeon, where there were narrow places, that the holy man had no space either freely to rise or to stand or to sit down, or to lie down. Then the Prophet shews that he was so confined by the straitness of the place, that he could hardly sit or lay down or stand erect; and he says that he was there many days.[2]

[1] The versions and the *Targ.* render the word differently; its meaning was not evidently understood. *Blayney* gives the best explanation, who renders it "cells." "The dungeon," he says, was a deep pit like a well, and near the bottom were scooped niches, or cells, for the lodgement of the prisoners. The word comes from חנה, to fix, to settle, to lodge; hence the plural noun here means places for prisoners to settle or lodge on, where they could fix themselves, without sinking in the mire at the bottom of the pit, as the case was with Jeremiah on another occasion. See ch. xxxviii. 6. That pit, it seems, had no cells.—*Ed.*

[2] This paragraph is intermingled in the original with the text; but it has been thought better to introduce it separately.—*Ed.*

We must notice the circumstances of the case: It was a thing cruel enough in itself, that an innocent man, after having been beaten, should be thrust into prison: but when a dark and deep prison was chosen, and when he was confined to a narrow place, as though he was in fetters, it was a great addition to the indignity offered to him. Since then the holy Prophet was so atrociously treated, let us not think it strange, when the same thing at this day is endured by God's children, and for the same cause, even for bearing testimony to celestial truth. When the length of time is added, it increased the evil; for he was not retained in prison for a few days or for a month, but until the city was taken; not indeed in that prison, for the king, as we shall presently see, removed him into the court of the prison. He was, however, the second time cast into a filthy prison, as though he was destined to die; thence he was afterwards removed also by the order of the king. But the Prophet says, that he was in that dungeon many days. It now follows—

17. Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out; and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there *any* word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

17. Et misit rex Zedechias et sustulit eum; et interrogavit eum rex domi suæ secreto loco (*hoc est*, seorsum) et dixit, Estne sermo à Jehova? Tunc dixit Jeremias, Est; et dixit, In manum regis Babylonis traderis.

From these words we learn, that King Zedekiah, though he had not obeyed good and wise counsels, nor even God and his truth, was not yet one of the worst, for of his own self he called the Prophet to him, and wished to find out whether he could in any way appease God. There is here, in short, a description given of the character of Zedekiah: he was unwilling to submit to God and his word, and yet he was not so cruel as to become enraged against the Prophet; nor had he wholly cast away all fear of God, all concern for religion, and all regard for prophetic teaching. For he no doubt sent for Jeremiah as God's true servant, and in some degree honoured him, and wished God to be propitious to himself. But this is usually the case with hypocrites: they would willingly be reconciled with God, but at the same time they wish to remain free, that is, to retain their

own sinful dispositions; in short, they wish so to live as that God should give place to them, and allow them to sin as they please. Such was Zedekiah, and yet he had not reached to the highest pitch of impiety, for as yet he had some regard for the Prophet; nor was he so savage and cruel as his counsellors. He then called him to himself and asked him privately, that he might not depart, as we shall see in another place, in any measure from his royal dignity: for he simply asked the Prophet not to speak openly, because he would thus lose his own authority.

He then *asked* him in *secret*, because he had been perplexed. He wished indeed for some favourable answer, but he hardly dared to hope for it; and therefore he led the Prophet to a secret place, and asked him without any being a witness, *Is there*, he said, *a word from God?* Some explain this, as though Zedekiah had asked whether the prophecies of Jeremiah were true, as though he had said, "What thou hast hitherto spoken, has it come from God?" but this is no suitable explanation; on the contrary, he asked, Whether the Prophet had lately received any word from God? He wished then for some new message, and to hear something respecting the future deliverance of the city: for he was no doubt persuaded that Jeremiah had been hitherto discharging the office of a Prophet, as it became him; for he did not ask him as a common man, nor did he regard him as an impostor, but inquired whether there was a word from God. True is what I before stated, that hypocrites always seek God's favour in a foolish way; for they would have God to gratify their sinful lusts, but God cannot deny himself. Hence Zedekiah, though he shewed apparently some regard for religion, yet foolishly asked, Whether there was a word from Jehovah? that is, Whether any message had been lately made known to Jeremiah? He answered, *There is*, even this, *Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the Chaldeans.*

Here we may notice the boldness of the Prophet; he had not been broken down by all the evils he had met with, but ever faithfully performed the office committed to him. He therefore answered the king honestly, though not without

danger, *Thou shalt be delivered,* he said, *into the hands of the Chaldeans:* for he had hardly come out of prison, where he had been buried as in a grave, and we shall see that the prison had been to him like death; and the Prophet was not divested of infirmity and fear, as he will presently shew; yet fear did not prevent him from faithfully performing the office committed to him. Though the Prophet dreaded the sufferings of the prison, though he also feared death, he yet overcame all these feelings, and presented his life as a sacrifice, when he openly and boldly answered the king, that the Chaldeans would shortly be conquerors, and make him a captive. Then follows the expostulation which the Prophet made to the king—

18. Moreover, Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison?

18. Et dixit Jeremias regi Zedechiæ: Quid peccavi tibi et servis tuis? (*hoc est,* quid sceleris in te admisi et in servos tuos) et populum hunc, quod tradidistis me in domum carceris.

Though the Prophet had spoken what was displeasing to the king, he yet complains that wrong had been done to him, as he had been cast into prison; and thus he shews that he had been unjustly condemned for having threatened ruin to the city and destruction to the kingdom, because he was constrained to do this by the obligations of his office. Hence the Prophet shews that he had not sinned in this—that he had proclaimed God's commands, however bitter they were to the king and to the people.

This passage deserves special notice: earthly princes are so proud, that as soon as they order anything, they wish every dispute about their authority to be suspended; for they will have their own ordinances to be counted laws, and their own decrees to be sacred and authoritative; and yet we know, that by following their own wills, they decree often what is wholly unjust and inconsistent with everything that is reasonable. This passage then, as I have said, deserves special notice; for Jeremiah boldly declares that he had not sinned, because he had threatened the king, displeased his counsellors, inveighed against the impiety of the people, and denounced utter ruin on the city and the Temple. He then denies that in all this he had done anything wrong. So also

Daniel said, "Against God and the king have I not sinned," (Dan. vi. 22;) and yet he had disregarded the king's decree, and firmly refused by an impious flattery to put the king in the place of God: he however denied that he had done anything wrong against the king, because his decree was unjust and wicked. Let us then bear in mind, that though princes may ill bear their decrees to be disregarded by us, they are yet not absolved before God and his angels, and also that we can boldly, openly, and with a full mouth, as they say, assert our innocence, when religion constrains us, and when it is not lawful to obey the impious and unjust edicts of kings. He afterwards adds—

19. Where *are* now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?

19. Et ubi prophetæ vestri, qui prophetarunt vobis, dicendo, Non veniet rex Babylonis contra vos et contra hanc terram?

Here Jeremiah, taking confidence, advances to a higher ground; for he reprobates the folly of Zedekiah, because he had given ear to the false prophets and their flatteries. But this he did, that he might more fully confirm his own innocence, as though he had said, "I indeed am grievously blamed, because I threatened ruin to the city and the Temple; but what if the Lord had constrained me to do so? and it is evident that I was commissioned by God, and that I alleged nothing without authority; for I have always declared what has happened, and events have proved that I was sent from above, when I announced to you what was to be. But where are your prophets? for they have been always flattering you; and it has happened through their falsehoods, that ye have not returned to the right way. It was yet in your power to be reconciled to God, when I at first warned you; and all my labour and endeavours were for this end, that you might anticipate God's wrath by a willing repentance. Since then your prophets have deceived you, and the event now clearly proves this, know, O king, that I have been sent from above."

We thus see that Jeremiah was not so anxious about his life, but that he always remained stedfast to his purpose; and thus he turned not aside from making an honest profession of the truth, so as to provide for his own safety, as they

do, who are fearful and think that they act prudently, when they are compliant and try to please men opposed to them at the expense of truth. This was not done by Jeremiah. He had indeed a regard for his life, as we shall now see; but he went on in the discharge of his office, and valued the truth communicated to him from above more than hundred lives. It is then with reference to this that he says, *Where are your prophets?* as though he had said, "You see that you have all been deceived by their false prophecies." It follows—

20. Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there.

20. Et tu audi obsecro (*vel*, nunc, *vel* agedum,) domine mi Rex; cadat precatio mea coram facie tua, ut ne (*ad verbum*, et non *sed*, *potius*, ut ne) remittas me (*vel*, redire me facias) in domum Jonathan scribæ, neque moriar illic.

This verse shews that Jeremiah was not destitute of human feelings, for he, as other men, dreaded death. But yet he could so control himself, that no fear made him to turn aside from his duty. Fear, then, did not dishearten him, as the boldness which we have noticed was a manifest proof of his constancy. The Prophet therefore overcame, as to his work, every anxiety and the fear of death; and yet he did not disregard his life, but sought, as far as he could, deliverance from his evils. He asked for some alleviation from the king. We hence see that the Prophets were not logs of wood, nor had iron hearts; but though subject to human feelings, yet they elevated themselves to an invincible courage as to their work, so as to fulfil their office.

As to the words, *Let my prayer fall before thee*, they mean a humble supplication; it is a mode of expression derived, as we have before seen, from what was done by men in prostrating themselves in prayer, and is transferred here from God to mortals. The Prophet then humbly asked, that he might not be cast again into that horrid prison where he had been confined—and why? that he might *not die*. We see that he shunned death, for this was natural; and yet he was prepared to die, whenever necessary, rather than to turn

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Here Jeremiah, taking confidence, advances to a higher ground; for he reprobates the folly of Zedekiah, because he had given ear to the false prophets and their flatteries. But this he did, that he might more fully confirm his own innocence, as though he had said, "I indeed am grievously blamed, because I threatened ruin to the city and the Temple; but what if the Lord had constrained me to do so? and it is evident that I was commissioned by God, and that I alleged nothing without authority; for I have always declared what has happened, and events have proved that I was sent from above, when I announced to you what was to be. But where are your prophets? for they have been always flattering you; and it has happened through their falsehoods, that ye have not returned to the right way. It was yet in your power to be reconciled to God, when I at first warned you; and all my labour and endeavours were for this end, that you might anticipate God's wrath by a willing repentance. Since then your prophets have deceived you, and the event now clearly proves this, know, O king, that I have been sent from above."

We thus see that Jeremiah was not so anxious about his life, but that he always remained stedfast to his purpose; and thus he turned not aside from making an honest profession of the truth, so as to provide for his own safety, as they

but a scanty living. He had then a *crust* or piece of *bread every day.* We see how mean was his food; but God often tries his servants in this way, withholding from them all the delicacies of this world. It is added, *from the street of the bakers;* by these words is meant, I think, that it was coarse bread, not made of fine flour, such as rich men did eat, for their mouths could not endure what was rough and course. Then God's holy Prophet was content with the common bread. The king and his counsellors had their own bakers; but it is said that bread was brought to the Prophet from a common place, *the street of the bakers.* And the bread then sold during such a scarcity was no doubt black bread. We hence see what kind of bread it was, because it was sold for the common use of the people.

Thus the Prophet shews, that though some relaxation was allowed him, he was still confined in prison, and also that no meat nor any delicacies were given him, but a crust of bread only. He however commemorates the favour of God, inasmuch as in so great a scarcity he was not without bread. He had, then, his daily bread until all provisions failed.

And hence we learn, that God often so provides for his servants, that he appears to have forsaken them; and yet he then especially takes care of them and supplies them with what is needful for their support. Had Jeremiah been at home, he might have been at any time stoned by the people; for there were not wanting those disposed to stir up famished men against him. He might then have been every moment in danger of his life at home. But now in prison, he was safe, and no one could do him any harm. Besides, had he been at home, many might have robbed him, so as to leave him nothing to preserve life; but in prison he had his daily allowance. Thus, then, God often conducts his servants in a manner that is wonderful and beyond what we can conceive, and in the meantime acts as the head of a family, in supplying their wants. In short, the Prophet here intimates that he was cared for by God, so that during the famine and scarcity among the whole people, his bread was yet given to him, when he could not have begged it. When he could not have procured bread for himself either by labour, or by in-

aside in the least from discharging the duty imposed on him by God.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we must in various ways carry on a warfare on earth, we may be animated by the power of thy Spirit, so as to go on through fire and water, and be ever so subject to thee, that relying on thine aid, we may never hesitate to face all perils of death, all troubles, all reproaches, and all the terrors of men, until having at length gained the final victory, we shall come to that blessed rest, which thine only-begotten Son hath procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-Seventh.

21. Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

21. Et præcepit rex Zedechias, et posuerunt Jeremiam in atrio custodiæ, et dederunt ei frustum panis quotidie e platea pistorum, usque dum consumptus esset totus panis ex urbe: et habitavit Jeremias in atrio custodiæ.

The Prophet tells us, that God regarded the miseries to which he had been unjustly exposed: and the king no doubt became humane towards Jeremiah, because God turned his heart towards what was just and right. We said, indeed, yesterday, that the king was not in disposition cruel or sanguinary; yet he would not have been so easily entreated by the Prophet, had he not been influenced by the hidden working of God's Spirit. We hence see how God favours his servants and has regard for their infirmity when necessary. We yet see also that the Prophet was not so kindly dealt with as to be allowed to return free to his own house, but that he was removed to another prison, where his condition was more tolerable. *He was* then *in the court of the prison.*

He says, that a *crust of bread* was *given to him daily*, or every day. The word כִּכַּר, *kekar*, is by some rendered "mass," or lump, and means sometimes a large loaf; but it is probable, that during so much scarcity the Prophet had

in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

qui erat in atrio custodiæ; et (itaque) demiserunt Jeremiam funibus; et in lacu non erat aqua, sed cœnum; et demersus fuit Jeremias in cœno.

Here is narrated the extreme presumption as well as cruelty of the princes; for they cast the holy Prophet into a pit, where he sank in the mire. It was a proof of hardened impiety not to spare so excellent a servant of God; and it was also a savage cruelty, when they had no cause of being so filled with rage, except that Jeremiah had obeyed God, and faithfully performed the office committed to him.

Let us at the same time learn from this example, whenever it pleases the Lord to try our patience, to bear with resignation what we see to have been borne by the holy Prophet. If, then, we shudder at any time at the horrors of the cross, so that it may seem hard to us to bear persecution, let us remember this example of the Prophet. In a word, there is here, on the one hand, shewn to us, as in a picture, the wickedness of the world; and on the other, the wonderful constancy and also the singular meekness of God's servant shine forth gloriously.

Jeremiah then says, that he was *taken by the princes and cast into a pit, which was in the court of the prison;* and in that part, where one of the counsellors dwelt, even *Malchiah the son of Hamelech.* And at the same time he describes the state of the place, that it was a miry pit, so that he sank down in the mud. He does not mean that he was covered with mud, but that he was fixed in it, as the Hebrew word intimates; and we may thus rightly render the words, "He lay fixed in the mud." It now follows—

7. Now, when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon, (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin,)

7. Audivit autem Ebedmelech Æthiops vir eunuchus (*vel,* unus ex numero procerum, סרסים *enim ut alibi dictum fuit, non tantum eunuchos vocant, sed etiam proceres et consiliarios regis*) ipse autem erat in domo regis (*per parenthesin hoc legendum est,* audivit *ergo*) quod posuissent Jeremiam in lacum; rex autem sedebat in porta Benjamin:

8. Ebed-melech went forth out of

8. Et egressus est Ebedmelech e

dustry, or by begging, or by money, he shews that God took care of him so as to feed him during that distress.

He however adds, that he was *in the court of the prison*, in order to shew that God tried his patience, for a prison was a place of degradation. The Prophet was exposed to the reproaches of all; and then the princes might have often threatened him with danger, and might have also transferred him to another place, as we shall hereafter see. Therefore, in a measure only did God bring aid to his Prophet, for it was not his pleasure wholly to deliver him, and yet he suffered him not to be reduced to extremities. Now follows—

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1. Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying,

2. Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.

3. Thus saith the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

4. Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death; for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

1. Et audivit **Saphatias filius Mattam**, et Gundalias **filius Passhur**, et Juchal filius **Selemiæ**, et **Passhur** filius Malchiæ, **sermones quos Jeremias** loquutus **fuerat ad totum populum**, dicendo,

2. Sic dicit Jehova, **Qui manebit** in urbe hac morietur **gladio, fame et** peste; qui autem **egressus fuerit ad** Chaldæos, vivet et erit **ei anima sua** in spolium et vivet.

3. Sic dicit Jehova, Ecce **tradendo** tradetur hæc urbs in **manum** exercitus regis Babylonis, **et capiet eam.**

4. Et dixerunt **principes ad regem**, Moriatur nunc (*vel*, agedum, *est hortantis particula* נָא) vir iste, **quoniam** propterea (*vel*, hoc modo) **solvit** manus virorum bellicosorum, **qui** residui sunt in urbe hac, et **manus** totius populi, loquendo ad ipsos secundum istos sermones; **quoniam** hic vir non quærit pacem (*hoc est*, non spectat ad pacem) populo **huic** (populi hujus) quin potius **ad malum.**

The Prophet now shews that he was again dragged from the court of the prison to the inner part, which was dark, filthy, and like a grave. The cause of this he states: it

was because four of the princes had heard his words. It is probable that many of the people had come there for the purpose of hearing the Prophet, and that he, having received a message, delivered it to every one that came to him. Though then he was shut up in prison, yet the word of God could not be bound, as Paul says, who gloried in the fact, that though he was in chains, yet the truth spread far and wide. (2 Tim. ii. 9.) Such was the case as to Jeremiah; though he was retained as a prisoner, he yet ceased not to discharge his office; and yet there is no doubt but that the purpose of the king was in this way to restrain him. The prison was, as it were, the captivity of prophetic truth. But the king and his counsellors were mistaken; for Jeremiah was not less free in the court of the prison, than if he had walked through the city all the day, nay, he had many heralds.

But the four princes mentioned here watched him, even *Shephatiah, Gedaliah, Jucal,* and *Pashur.* Then the four princes he names, having insidiously watched what he said, immediately made a commotion. They had, no doubt, contrived the ruin of the Prophet before they came to the king; for the unprincipled and wicked, we know, discuss matters together when intent on mischief, and their courtly arts must be taken to the account. As, then, the four were in authority, they must, doubtless, have influenced the greatest part of the king's council, and led astray easy men, or such as were not of themselves bent on evil. The matter was at length brought before the king; and therefore he adds, that they *came to the king.* But he first explains the doctrine, on account of which these unprincipled men created so much ill-will to him, and endangered his life. Hence he says that the accusation was, that he had not only threatened with ruin all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but that he had also promised life to all that would go out to the Chaldeans: *Every one who abides in the city shall die by the sword, famine, or pestilence; but every one who goeth out to the Chaldeans shall live.* This was the accusation.

We have seen elsewhere that the Prophet had before said the same; it was not, then, a new thing, for he had thirty years before that time clearly pronounced the same in the

Temple, and it was then written as a prophecy and fixed to the doors of the Temple. It was, therefore, nothing new to hear all this from the mouth of Jeremiah. But as I have already said, the king and his courtiers thought that he was so subdued by evils that he could hardly open his mouth. In short, they thought that the holy man had, in a manner, lost his tongue since he had been in prison. This, then, was the reason why they now accused him so gravely to the king, and declared him worthy of death. He had deserved death many years before, if he had now committed a capital offence. But as I have already stated, they regarded the Prophet as having designedly despised the king's authority, and they were indignant because he could not be subdued, when yet he was a prisoner and might see danger at hand every hour. This, then, was the reason why they regarded as a new thing what Jeremiah said, *Whosoever abides in the city shall perish*, &c.

As to these threatenings, we have elsewhere said, that all those who expected help from the Egyptians were wilful despisers of God; for the Prophet had often exhorted them all, quietly and submissively to bear that temporary punishment which God had resolved to inflict on them. They wished in their perverseness to drive to a distance God's judgment, and then when they saw that God was their enemy, they deemed it enough to have the Egyptians as their friends. It was then no wonder that the Prophet allotted to them the sword, and famine, and pestilence.

He then adds, *Whosoever passeth over to the Chaldeans shall live.* The condition, however, was very hard; *his soul*, he says, *shall be for a prey*, as though he had said, "He who flees to the Chaldeans shall only save his life, but must suffer the loss of all his property," as when a shipwreck is dreaded, there is no one who is not ready to save his life at the loss of all his goods; and, therefore, in extreme danger the merchants are wont to cast into the sea all that they have, for they prefer to escape to the harbour empty and destitute of everything, than to perish together with their riches. It was, then, a hard condition; but the Prophet shews that they could not otherwise escape; they were to

give up their own country, and all other things, and could only preserve their life. For this reason he says, that their life would be for a prey to them, as when anything is snatched from the fire, or as when one is exposed to plunder, he were content to take something away by stealth, for otherwise, if he sought to take away many things, he would have to contend with many enemies. The Prophet then intimates that the Jews could not save themselves from death in any other way than by casting away all they had, and by being solicitous only to save life. He again repeats, *he shall live.* By this repetition he more pressingly urged them, and with more earnestness exhorted them to save their life.

Then follows a confirmation, *Given up shall be this city into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon, and they shall take it.* The Prophet shews the reason why he exhorted the Jews to flee, because the city would at length be taken. This is substantially what he says.

Now the princes add, *Die let this man, because in this manner,* or therefore, that is, on account of his bad counsel, *he weakens the hands of the men of war,* &c. Here *hand* is to be taken for valour, for deeds are mainly performed by the hands. Hence to loosen or weaken the hands means the same as to render men inert, or so idle as not to move a finger. Then the princes accused Jeremiah on this account, that he terrified the men of war, and thus rendered them listless. It was a specious charge; but the slander had nothing to support it; for Jeremiah could not have been condemned as a public enemy to his country, when he earnestly exhorted them to flee and gave no hope to the people, in order they might all, despairing of deliverance, willingly surrender themselves to their enemies.

A question may be raised here, whether it is lawful for a private individual to persuade subjects to violate their oath of allegiance to their king or prince. I now call Prophets private persons; for I have in view civil order. Jeremiah, indeed, sustained a public character, for he was God's Prophet; but as to the government of the city he was a private individual, one of the people. It seems, then, that the Pro-

phet had passed over the limits of what is right, when he persuaded the people to revolt, for that could not have been done without forfeiting allegiance to the king. To this I answer, that the Prophet was invested with a special command, and that, therefore, he did nothing presumptuously or rashly. Though, then, the people had pledged to the end their faith to the king, yet as God had now delivered the city to the Chaldeans, the obligation of the oath ceased; for when governments are changed, whatever the subjects had promised is no longer binding. As, for example, when any country has a prince, he binds the whole people to himself by an oath, so that they may all abide in their allegiance. When any one invades that country, the subjects incur the charge of perfidy if they come not forward and assist their prince, as they had promised; but when a foreign enemy takes possession of the whole land, the obligation of the oath ceases; for it is not in the power of the people to set up princes, because it belongs to God to change governments as he pleases. Since, then, this power belongs to God alone, while a prince rules, the people ought resolutely to continue obedient to him, as their legitimate prince, set over them by God. But this was not at that time the case with the Jews; for though the Chaldeans had not yet entered the city, yet God had declared that they were its masters. The people, then, were not to wait until the Chaldeans broke in into the city, burnt its houses, and killed all they met with; but it ought to have been sufficient for them that the prediction of the Prophet was the decree or sentence of God, by which they were given up to the Chaldeans.

The question as to Jeremiah and all others in similar circumstances, is now answered: for when any one sees only some danger at hand, he ought not, on that account, to persuade the people to forsake their prince; but every one who seeks to be God's faithful servant, will risk his own life in the defence of his king. When called to his council, he will advise what is useful and right; but he will not stir up commotions and tumults: on the contrary, he would rather die a hundred times than cause the people to revolt either by his counsels or by his influence. But the case of Jeremiah,

his efforts. There is then no doubt but that Ebedmelech, being very confident, prudently considered what might prevent him in his attempt of bringing help to the holy Prophet. Hence it was, that he stealthily took from a hidden place these worn-out and marred garments. This is one thing. Then we see the miserable state of the holy Prophet; he lay half buried in mud, and he was to be drawn out by ropes or cords, and to have these torn and worn-out garments under his arms. And we are afterwards expressly told for what purpose these clothes were sent down to him.

12. And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now *these* old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine arm holes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.

12. Et dixit Ebedmelech Æthiops Jeremiæ, Pone nunc veteramenta tractorum et corruptorum sub axillis manuum tuarum subtus funes: et fecit Jeremias sic.

We find the same words here as before, *Put now the old tatters, dragged or torn and rotten,*[1] *under the pits of thy hands underneath the cords.* This is an improper mode of speaking in Latin, but not in Hebrew. Then it is, "Put them under thine armpits underneath the cords." This was to be done, lest the Prophet should receive any hurt; for he was to be drawn up by the cords, and he was fixed in the mud: and this could not have been done without lacerating his skin and injuring his armpits, for that part, we know, is tender. Then Ebedmelech ordered the Prophet to take these old tatters and to put them under the cords, so that he might be drawn up by the men with the least injury. This was the advice of Ebedmelech, and Jeremiah did as he was bidden.

God thus delivered his Prophet in a wonderful manner from death: but we hence see how miserable was his condition; for the Prophet could not have otherwise escaped than by using these worn-out and rotten tatters and by being drawn up by cords. There is no doubt but that he had thought of the difficulty; for he had been there now some time; and he was not so strong that he could trust to his own arms, and he knew that his hands were not strong enough to hold fast the cords. But he doubtless cast all his cares on God

[1] *Blayney* gives a better version, "torn rags and worn-out rags." The literal rendering is, "Rags of the torn, and rags of the rotten."—*Ed.*

then absurd to bring against him this unjust charge, that he sought not the *good* of the people, but their *ruin*.

But as we said yesterday, all the sayings and doings of the saints have been always unjustly condemned. And if the same thing happen to us at this day, let us patiently bear it. We also see that it has been always objected to the Prophets and faithful teachers, as a crime, that they did not consult the public good, as all ungodly men at this day bring the same charge against us, especially the courtiers, who take it as granted, that were anything changed, it would be the cause of all kinds of disturbances; and hence they think, that their religion could not possibly fall without ruin to the public good. Hence it comes, that the free preaching of the Gospel is disliked by them, as though it brought with it some public calamity. Therefore they call us turbulent; and they say that we go astray through ignorance: though we are not avowedly enemies to the public good, yet we do not understand how kingdoms are to be governed; and hence we rashly stir up the greatest tumults. All these reproaches we have to bear, as Jeremiah did, when, with a quiet mind, he endured the hatred which the princes unjustly produced against him, on account of his doctrine, which yet he had announced by God's command, and which was necessary for the safety of the city and people; for the Jews could not, against God's will, remain in their city, from which God had resolved to remove them. When, therefore, Jeremiah saw that the city could not be defended against the Chaldeans, even had he been the only counsellor of the king, and not God's Prophet, what could he have advised better or more beneficial, than to anticipate the extreme cruelty of their enemies, and at least to do all they could, that the city might not be burnt with fire, and that the slaughter of the people might not be universal, but that they might continue alive, with the loss only of their property? He could not then have brought a better counsel. But, as I have already said, nothing is deemed good or useful by the ungodly, except liberty perversely to resist God. This was the reason why they so unjustly accused God's Prophet. It follows—

5. Then Zedekiah the king said, Be- 5. Et dixit rex Zedechias,

hold, he *is* in your hand: for the king *is* not *he that* can do *any* thing against you.

Ecce ipse in manibus vestris; quia rex non potest erga vos quicquam.

Zedekiah doubtless knew that wrong was done to the holy Prophet; for though he wished him to remain as he was, yet he knew that the Prophet had not threatened the people from ill-will or a hostile mind; and he was thus conscious that he had to do with God rather than with a mortal man. However this may have been, he knew that Jeremiah was not an enemy to the public safety according to the charge brought by the princes. He might then have wished to deliver the Prophet from their hands, but he submitted to their fury; for he was divested of all regal power, and was become, as it were, a slave to his own counsellors, on whom depended the government of the kingdom.

They wrongly explain this verse, who think that the king spoke honourably of his counsellors, as though he had said, that such was their prudence and dignity, that nothing could be denied them. They pervert the meaning of the Prophet; for the king, on the contrary, acknowledges here, that he was reduced to such a condition, as though he were a private individual. He, in short, confessed that he was the servant of servants; "Now I see," he says, "that I am no king, but that ye so rule, that, willing or unwilling, I am forced to yield to you, even in the best cause." There is then no doubt but that it was the bitter complaint of the king when he said, *The king can do nothing against you*.[1]

But Zedekiah deserved this degradation: for he ought to have been from the beginning more teachable, and to submit to God. But in the first place, as we have seen, he had despised prophetic doctrine, and hearkened not to the voice of God; and in the second place, he revolted perfidiously from the Chaldean king, and became thus guilty of ingratitude, for when his nephew was dethroned, that is, Jeconiah or Coniah, he obtained the regal power through the favour of the king of Babylon. He had therefore been ungrateful in denying tribute to him. But his impiety was the main cause of all evils. As then he had been such a rebel against

[1] "The king," observes *Blayney*, "evidently speaks this in disgust with the princes, for endeavouring to frustrate his clemency."—*Ed.*

God, he deserved that the princes should prove rebels to him. He then degraded himself, and deprived himself of royal authority, when he refused submission to the word of God, and also when he denied tribute to the king of Babylon. It was no wonder, then, that God made him subject to the princes and counsellors, who were yet his servants.

As to these courtiers, their arrogance was inexcusable in daring to condemn Jeremiah; for this was to take away from the king his own right; *Die let this man,* for he is worthy of death. Why was it that they were not content with accusing him, without assuming also to be his sole judges? As, then, they treated the king so disrespectfully, there is no doubt but they were despisers of God, when they deemed as nothing the royal dignity. But as to the king, he reaped, as I have said, the fruit of his own impiety, for he had not given to God his due honour in embracing the truth taught by the Prophet. It was therefore necessary, that he should be unworthily and contumeliously treated, so that he dared not to say even one word in behalf of a just and good cause. This was the reason why he said, *He is in your hands, for the king can do nothing against you.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou invitest us daily to thyself with so much kindness, and givest us also time to repent, and then offerest to us the hope of mercy and salvation, if we return to thee,—O grant, that we may not pass by such benevolent warnings with deaf ears, but in due time attend to thee, and with true and sincere acknowledgment of all our sins so surrender up ourselves to thee, that we may find thee to be merciful; and that when we return to thee we may so continue in obedience to thee, that we may be capable of receiving thy constant kindness, until the full fruition of it shall be given us in thy celestial kingdom, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-Eighth.

6. Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hamelech, that *was*

6. Et tulerunt Jeremiam, et demiserunt eum in puteum Malchiæ filii Hammalech (in lacum, *proprie,*)

in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.

qui erat in atrio custodiæ; et (itaque) demiserunt Jeremiam funibus; et in lacu non erat aqua, sed cœnum; et demersus fuit Jeremias in cœno.

HERE is narrated the extreme presumption as well as cruelty of the princes; for they cast the holy Prophet into a pit, where he sank in the mire. It was a proof of hardened impiety not to spare so excellent a servant of God; and it was also a savage cruelty, when they had no cause of being so filled with rage, except that Jeremiah had obeyed God, and faithfully performed the office committed to him.

Let us at the same time learn from this example, whenever it pleases the Lord to try our patience, to bear with resignation what we see to have been borne by the holy Prophet. If, then, we shudder at any time at the horrors of the cross, so that it may seem hard to us to bear persecution, let us remember this example of the Prophet. In a word, there is here, on the one hand, shewn to us, as in a picture, the wickedness of the world; and on the other, the wonderful constancy and also the singular meekness of God's servant shine forth gloriously.

Jeremiah then says, that he was *taken by the princes and cast into a pit, which was in the court of the prison;* and in that part, where one of the counsellors dwelt, even *Malchiah the son of Hamelech.* And at the same time he describes the state of the place, that it was a miry pit, so that he sank down in the mud. He does not mean that he was covered with mud, but that he was fixed in it, as the Hebrew word intimates; and we may thus rightly render the words, "He lay fixed in the mud." It now follows—

7. Now, when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon, (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin,)

7. Audivit autem Ebedmelech Æthiops vir eunuchus (*vel,* unus ex numero procerum, סרסים *enim ut alibi dictum fuit, non tantum eunuchos vocant, sed etiam proceres et consiliarios regis*) ipse autem erat in domo regis (*per parenthesin hoc legendum est,* audivit *ergo*) quod posuissent Jeremiam in lacum; rex autem sedebat in porta Benjamin:

8. Ebed-melech went forth out of

8. Et egressus est Ebedmelech e

the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,

9. My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for *there is* no more bread in the city.

domo (vel, palatio) regis, et loquutus est ad regem, dicendo,

9. Domine, mi Rex, perverse egerunt viri isti in omnibus quæ fecerunt Jeremiæ Prophetæ, quando eum demiserunt in foveam (*vel*, lacum,) uti subtus se morietur a fame (*hoc est*, præ fame,) quia nullus panis amplius est in urbe.

Jeremiah relates here how he was delivered from death; for he could not have lived long in the mire; partly, because he must have died through want; and partly, he must have been starved through cold and suffocated with the filth of the dungeon. But God rescued him in a wonderful manner through the aid of Ebedmelech, an Ethiopian. He was an alien, and this is expressly said, that we may know, that among the king's counsellors there was no one who resisted so great a wickedness. But there was one found, an Ethiopian, who came to the aid of God's Prophet.

There is then implied here a comparison between an Ethiopian, an alien, and all the Jews, who professed themselves to be the holy seed of Abraham, who had been circumcised, and boasted loudly of God's law and covenant; and yet there was not one among them, who would stretch forth his hand to the holy servant of God! It may be there were some who pitied him, but courage was wanting; so that no one dared to open his mouth, for it was a reproach to patronize the holy man. They, then, preferred the favour of the ungodly to their own duty. But there was an Ethiopian so courageous, that he dared to accuse all the king's courtiers and the other princes. There is, then, no doubt but that the Spirit by the mouth of the Ethiopian brought a perpetual disgrace on the king's princes, who passed themselves as the children of Abraham, and boasted in high terms of God's covenant. A similar case is represented by Christ in a parable, when he says that a Levite and a priest passed by a wounded man and disregarded him, but that help was brought to him by a Samaritan. (Luke x. 30-35.) His purpose, no doubt, was to condemn the Jews, even the Levites and the priests, for their barbarity in caring nothing for the life of a miserable man in his extremity. So also, in this

place, the Ethiopian is set forth to us as an example, for he alone had the feeling of kindness and humanity, so as to bring help to the holy Prophet, and to rescue him, as it were, from immediate death and the grave: but we see all the king's courtiers either wholly torpid or influenced by the same spirit of rage and cruelty, as to be mortal enemies to the holy man, because he freely and openly declared to them the command of God.

And Jeremiah says that *Ebedmelech heard*, &c. We may hence conclude, that he was anxious about the safety of the holy Prophet, and that he had his friends who watched the proceedings. It is then added, that he was *in the palace*, but that the *king was sitting in the gate of Benjamin;* for kings were wont to administer justice in the gates, and to have there their tribunal; and it was there that the people held their regular assemblies. *The king*, then, *was sitting in the gate of Benjamin.* But, in the meantime, his palace was a place of execution and the den of robbers. We hence see that the sloth of the king is here denoted, for he apparently performed the proper office of a king, but neglected the principal part of it, for he suffered a holy man to be cast into a pit. As, then, he thus exposed the Prophet's life to the will of the princes, it is evident that he was but an empty shadow, though he stood there as the judge of the people, and had there a sacred tribunal.

It now follows, that Ebedmelech *went forth from the palace* and *came* to the king's tribunal, that he might there plead the cause of the Prophet. It is right to notice this circumstance as well as the former. For if Ebedmelech had met the king accidentally, he might have spoken to him in passing; but as he went forth from the palace, it is clear that he had been meditating on what he was going to do, and that he had not felt only a sudden impulse of compassion: but that when he might have rested quietly in the palace, he came of his own accord to the king to make known his complaint. And further, he did not address the king in a room or in some private corner of the palace, but he spoke to him in the gate, that is, in a public assembly. We hence see that the previous circumstance commends to us the per-

severance of this man, for he was not only suddenly moved, but persevered in his holy purpose; and the second circumstance commends to us his magnanimity, for he did not shun ill-will, but openly and boldly spoke for Jeremiah before the people; and he amplified the excellency of the Prophet by bringing an accusation against the princes. He no doubt knew that he was bringing himself into danger, but he exposed his own life that he might aid the Prophet.

He then said, that the king's counsellors had *done wickedly in all the things which they had done against Jeremiah the Prophet*, because they had cast him into the well: and he added, *There he will die under himself*, or as some render it, and rightly, "in his own place." But the expression is striking, but cannot be fully expressed in our language: for Ebedmelech meant that Jeremiah would die, though no one molested him, though no evil or harm were done to him by another. *He will*, then, *die in his own place*, that is, he will die, if left where he is; because he lay, as it has appeared, sunk in mire. And then he said, *He will die through famine;* for he had been cast into the pit as into a grave. And as scarcity prevailed among the whole people, Jeremiah could not have hoped for any aid; and bread, as we shall hereafter see, could not have been thrown to him. Then Ebedmelech says here first, that Jeremiah had been unworthily treated, because he was *God's Prophet;* for he honours him with this title, that he might expose the impiety of the princes; and secondly, he shews how miserably he lay in the pit, because no one could supply him with food, and there was no more bread in the city. It now follows—

10. Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.

10. Et præcepit rex ipsi Ebedmelech Æthiopi, Sume ad manum tuam hinc triginta viros, et educas Jeremiam Prophetam e fovea antequam moriatur.

We here see, what I have already said, that the Prophet's deliverance was wholly from above. The king, smitten with fear, had lately given over the holy Prophet to the cruelty of his princes; and had confessed that he had no longer any authority: "for it is not the king," he said, "who now

governs you." As, then, the king had not dared resolutely to contend against his princes, how was it, that he now ventured to extricate Jeremiah from the pit? We hence see that the king's mind had been changed; because he was lately so stunned with fear, that he dared not to plead the cause of the holy man; but now he commands the Ethiopian to *take him out from the pit.* It then appears that this was over-ruled by a divine power.

But let us hence learn to be courageous, when necessity requires, though there may not be a hope of a favourable issue. Ebedmelech might have thought within himself that his attempt would be in vain, however strenuously he might have pleaded for Jeremiah. He might, then, have thus relinquished that purpose which he had so boldly undertaken; for thus they who are over-wise are often led, as it were, into inertness: "What can you effect? thou art but one, and they are many; and then the thing is done. If the king himself has been forced to yield to their fury, and thou being a private individual, with what confidence can you resist them? and further, a tumult will be raised, and thou wilt perish in it; and in the meantime they will perhaps stone with stones that unhappy man, whom thou seekest to help." All these things might have occurred to Ebedmelech, and thus he might have desisted. But we see that he rested in confidence on God's favour. Let us, then, remembering his example, hope beyond hope, when God requires us to do a thing, that is, when faith, the obligation of duty, demands anything from us, and which may be done, if we close our eyes to all obstacles and go on in our work; for events are in God's hands alone, and they will be such as he pleases. In the meantime it is simply our duty to proceed in our course, though we may think that our labours will be in vain and without any fruit. Ebedmelech happily succeeded, and how? because he performed the part of a pious and upright man. Thus God will extend his hand to us; whatever difficulties may meet us, we shall overcome them all by his power and aid.

Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, Take hence thirty men with thee and extricate Jeremiah from the

well. Ebedmelech might even then have relinquished his undertaking; for he might not have been able with thirty men to overcome so great a power; for all the king's counsellors had united together, and no doubt they had enlisted many others. We thus see that Ebedmelech did not rely on human aid, but that being strengthened by invincible confidence he undertook this office, so that he dared to draw Jeremiah out of the pit. It hence follows—

11. So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts, and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

11. Et sumpsit Ebedmelech homines illos in manum suam (*hoc est*, sub sua potestate,) et venit in domum regis, nempe in locum sub thesauris; et sumpsit illinc veteramenta tractorum, et veteramenta (*ad verbum*) corruptorum, et demisit ad Jeremiam in lacum per funes.

Here Jeremiah goes on with the history of his deliverance. The courage of Ebedmelech ought ever to be noticed by us, for he went immediately to the holy Prophet. And it is said, that he *took* from some hidden place *old tatters, De vieux haillons*, as we call them. It is properly a noun substantive. But if its harshness be displeasing, we may give this rendering, "old tatters which had been dragged, and old tatters which were rotten." Yet some render the words thus, "Worn out clothes and rotten clothes." But the former is more properly the meaning; for סחב, *sacheb*, means to drag, and it may be rendered in French, *Vieux haillons trainez, ou, qui avoyent trainé.* Then we have סלחים, *salechim*, corrupted or marred, *usez;* for סלח, *salech*, means to salt; but it is a verb in *Hophal*, and in that form it means to corrupt. They were torn or rotten garments, *des vieux haillons à demi pourris.* It is said then that Ebedmelech took these old, torn, and rotten garments, and which had been used. This ought to be carefully noticed; for it appears that Ebedmelech was afraid of the violence of the princes, not so much on his own account, but lest he should be hindered in effecting his purpose.

For if he had provided other things, he might have been apprehended; report might have been brought to the princes, who would have immediately assembled and put a stop to

his efforts. There is then no doubt but that Ebedmelech, being very confident, prudently considered what might prevent him in his attempt of bringing help to the holy Prophet. Hence it was, that he stealthily took from a hidden place these worn-out and marred garments. This is one thing. Then we see the miserable state of the holy Prophet; he lay half buried in mud, and he was to be drawn out by ropes or cords, and to have these torn and worn-out garments under his arms. And we are afterwards expressly told for what purpose these clothes were sent down to him.

12. And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now *these* old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine arm holes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.

12. Et dixit Ebedmelech Æthiops Jeremiæ, Pone nunc veteramenta tractorum et corruptorum sub axillis manuum tuarum subtus funes: et fecit Jeremias sic.

We find the same words here as before, *Put now the old tatters, dragged or torn and rotten,*[1] *under the pits of thy hands underneath the cords.* This is an improper mode of speaking in Latin, but not in Hebrew. Then it is, "Put them under thine armpits underneath the cords." This was to be done, lest the Prophet should receive any hurt; for he was to be drawn up by the cords, and he was fixed in the mud: and this could not have been done without lacerating his skin and injuring his armpits, for that part, we know, is tender. Then Ebedmelech ordered the Prophet to take these old tatters and to put them under the cords, so that he might be drawn up by the men with the least injury. This was the advice of Ebedmelech, and Jeremiah did as he was bidden.

God thus delivered his Prophet in a wonderful manner from death: but we hence see how miserable was his condition; for the Prophet could not have otherwise escaped than by using these worn-out and rotten tatters and by being drawn up by cords. There is no doubt but that he had thought of the difficulty; for he had been there now some time; and he was not so strong that he could trust to his own arms, and he knew that his hands were not strong enough to hold fast the cords. But he doubtless cast all his cares on God

[1] *Blayney* gives a better version, "torn rags and worn-out rags." The literal rendering is, "Rags of the torn, and rags of the rotten."—*Ed.*

and his providence. Though then he does but briefly tell us that he did as he was bidden, he yet has left us to consider how much confidence he had, when he immediately obeyed, and did not decline what he might have justly feared, that he was feeble and weak; nor did he know whether his hands were strong enough to hold the cords, nor how the cords were to be applied to his shoulders. He therefore did what Ebedmelech had told him, for he knew that the advice came from God. It afterwards follows—

13. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

13. Et extraxerunt Jeremiam funibus, et extulerunt ipsum e fovea (*vel*, lacu;) et habitavit Jeremias in atrio custodiæ.

We here see that the Prophet was rescued from death, not however that he might be set at liberty, and sent home, for that would not have been for his benefit, as he would have been taken again by the king's counsellors. Ebedmelech could not, therefore, save his life otherwise than by having him confined in another part of the prison. He could have wished, no doubt, to have him as a guest in his own house: he doubtless wished to do for him more than he did. But his prudence deserves to be commended, that he placed the Prophet again in prison; for otherwise the fury and cruelty of the princes could not have been mitigated. Then *Jeremiah dwelt in the court of the prison.*

He was evidently led there by Ebedmelech. If one were to object and say that this was a proof of too much timidity; to this the answer is, that Ebedmelech was not fearful on his own account, but because he saw that he had to do with wild beasts; and he saw that their rage could not otherwise be calmed than by having Jeremiah confined in the prison. Indeed, the whole city was then like a prison, as it is well known; for they were oppressed everywhere with want, and no one could hardly go out of his house. This state of things was then wisely considered by Ebedmelech, for he had not only his own business to attend to, but he also laboured to preserve God's Prophet.

When God at any time relieves our miseries, and yet does not wholly free us from them at once, let us bear them pa-

tiently, and call to mind this example of Jeremiah. God, indeed, manifested his power in delivering him, and yet it was his will that he should continue in prison: even thus he effects his work by degrees. If then the full splendour of God's grace does not shine on us, or if our deliverance is not as yet fully granted, let us allow God to proceed by little and little; and the least alleviation ought to be sufficient for comfort, resignation, and patience. It now follows,—

14. Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that *is* in the house of the Lord: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me.

14. Et misit rex Zedechias et tulit (*hoc est*, accersivit) Jeremiam Prophetam ad se ad ingressum tertium, qui erat in domo Jehovæ (*hoc est*, in ipso Templo,) et dixit rex ad Jeremiam, Ego interrogo te verbum, ne celes a me verbum (*hoc est*, Ego rem unam abs te quæro, ne quicquam celes.)

Here is added another narrative,—that King Zedekiah again sent for Jeremiah to come to him in the Temple, that is, in the court of the Temple; for it was not lawful for the king to enter into the Sanctuary, and the court is often called the Temple. But there were, as it is well known, many entrances. The largest gate was towards the east, but there were gates on the other sides. The court also had several parts, separated from each other. Then Zedekiah, that he might speak privately to Jeremiah, came to the third entrance of the court, and there he asked the Prophet faithfully to explain to him what he had received from God.

There is no doubt but that Zedekiah in course of time entertained a higher regard for Jeremiah as God's faithful servant. Yet he was not, as we have said, really attentive to the teaching of the Prophet. Hence the mind of the king was in a dubious state, like those hypocrites, who, having some seed of God's fear remaining in them, fluctuate and continually change, and have nothing solid and fixed. They dare not, indeed, to despise either God or his servants; nay, they acknowledge that they are under God's authority, and that his word is not evanescent; and yet they make evasions as much as they can, and seek to change, as it were, the nature of God. Such was the character of Zedekiah. For he was not one of those who grossly and openly despise

God, as we see at this day, the world being full of Epicureans, who regard religion as a fable. Such, then, was not Zedekiah, but he retained some fear of God; nay, he even shewed regard for the Prophet; and yet he was unwilling to submit to God, and to follow the counsels of the Prophet. He was, therefore, suspended, as it were, between two opinions. But it is probable that he entertained some hope, because he had saved the life of Jeremiah. He might, then, have thought that God was pacified, or that he would remit in some degree his severity, as hypocrites always flatter themselves. For if they do the least thing, they think that they merit some favour, I know not what, at God's hand. Hence Zedekiah, when he had relieved the holy Prophet, and fed him during the greatest scarcity, thought that this service was acceptable to God; and it was in part acceptable; but he was mistaken in thinking this to be a kind of expiation. Hence then it was that he sent for the Prophet; he expected some favourable answer, even that God's wrath was pacified, or at least mitigated. But we must defer the rest till to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, omnipotent God, that since the life of thy servants ought to be deemed precious by us, each of us, according to his ability may strive to do his part in this respect, and, in the meantime, so cultivate mutual love as to assist one another in time of necessity, and that we may also be so solicitous respecting thy servants, as to consecrate all our efforts, all our labours, and all our services to thee, and strive thus to please thee, so that all our doings may be directed to this end, until, having at length finished the course of our present warfare, we shall come to that rest in thy celestial kingdom, which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Forty-Ninth.

15. Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare *it* unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?

15. Et dixit Jeremias ad Zedechiam, Si annuntiavero tibi, an non interficiendo interficies me? et si consilium dedero tibi, non auscultabis mihi (non audies ad me, *ad verbum.*)

The Prophet seems here to have acted not very discreetly; for when he ought of his own accord to have announced to

the king the destruction of the city, being asked he refused to answer, or at least he took care of his life, and secured himself from danger before he uttered a word. And the Prophets, we know, disregarding their own life, ought to have preferred to it the commands of God, as we find was often the case with Jeremiah, who frequently at the risk of his life proclaimed prophecies calculated to rouse the hatred of all the people, and to create the greatest danger to himself. It seems, then, that he had made no good progress, since he now fails, as it were, in this hazardous act of his vocation, and dares not to expose himself to danger.

But it ought to be observed, that the Prophets had not always an express command to speak. For had God bidden Jeremiah to declare what we shall hereafter meet with, he would not have evaded the question; for he had been so trained up for a long time, that he feared not for himself so as to turn aside from the straight course of his office. That he now, then, seems to draw back, this he did because God had not as yet commanded him to explain to the king what we shall presently see. For he would have done this without benefit: and he had often admonished the king, and had seen that his counsel was despised. No wonder, then, that he was unwilling to endanger his life without any prospect of doing good. If any one brings this objection, that it is then lawful for us to do the same; to this I answer, that we are not thoughtlessly to cast pearls before swine; but until we try every means, we ought to hope for the best, and therefore to act confidently. But Jeremiah had fully performed his duty: for the king could not have pleaded mistake or ignorance, since the Prophet had so often testified that there was no other remedy for the evil but to pass over to the Chaldeans.

As then the Prophet had so often warned the king, he might now be silent, and thus excuse himself, "*Thou wilt kill me*, and at the same time *thou wilt not believe me*, or, thou wilt not obey, if I give thee counsel." These two clauses ought to be read together; for if Jeremiah had seen that there was a prospect of doing good, he would doubtless

have offered his life a sacrifice. But as he saw that his doctrine would be useless, and that his life was in danger, he did not think it right rashly to expose his life, when he could hope for no benefit. The Prophet then did not regard only his own danger, but was also unwilling to expose heavenly truth to scorn, for it had often been already despised. He then did not answer the king's question, because he was convinced that he would be disobedient, as he had ever been up to that very time. It follows—

16. So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, *As* the Lord liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life.

16. Et juravit rex Zedechias Jeremiæ in secreto, dicens, Vivit Jehova, qui fecit nobis animam hanc, si interfecero te, et si tradidero te in manum istorum qui quærunt animam tuam.

The king, desirous of having a new revelation, promised safety to the Prophet by an oath. He then swore that he would not take revenge, though he might be displeased with the Prophet's answer. He might indeed have conjectured, though Jeremiah had not expressly said anything, that the answer would be unfavourable, and by no means agreeable to his wishes. For if some pleasant and joyful oracle had been given to the Prophet, he would not have made a preface respecting his own danger, and the wrath of the king, and also respecting his obstinacy. Zedekiah then could have concluded, that nothing but what was sad could be expected. For this reason he made an oath, that whatever might be the answer, he would not be so offended as to cause any harm to the Prophet.

He said, *I will not kill thee, nor deliver thee into the hand of those who seek thy life*, that is, who are enemies to thy life: for to seek life is the same thing as to pursue man to death. It is a way of speaking that often occurs, especially in the Psalms. (Psalm xxxviii. 12; xl. 14, 15.) Then he refers to the mortal enemies of Jeremiah: and he promises at the same time that he would, with undisturbed mind, receive whatever he might hear from the Prophet.

Let us notice the form of the oath, *Live does Jehovah, who made for us this soul.* He first made an oath by the life of

God, that is, by the immortal God. The word חי, *chi*, when applied to God, denotes a life different from what is in men or in brute animals; for men live by the will of another, that is, while God gives them life. It belongs then to God alone to live, for we do not live, nor move, nor have any being but in him, as Paul says, in Acts xvii. 28; and hence he teaches us in another place, that God alone is immortal. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) At the same time comprehended in this word is everything that peculiarly belongs to God; for God does not live to enjoy ease and indulge in idleness, but to govern the universe, to exercise his power throughout heaven and earth, to judge men, to render to every one his own just reward. Then life in God is not an idle life, as ungodly men imagine, but includes his infinite power, justice, wisdom, and all that peculiarly belongs to him. Whenever then we speak of the life of God, let us know that we do not live but through him, and also that he does not sit idly and carelessly in heaven, but that he governs the whole world, and is the judge of men.

According to this meaning, then, Zedekiah said, *Live does Jehovah*, and then he added, *who made for us this soul.* He expresses more clearly what I have already stated, and it is the same as though he had offered his own life before God as a pledge. He then prayed for the punishment of perjury on himself; for when he made an oath by God, the giver of life, it was the same as though he had said, "Let my life be forfeited, if I deceive thee, or turn false." We hence see what is the end of an oath, even that God's sacred name may be for us a pledge, that our word may be relied on. It hence follows, that God's name, whenever we swear, cannot be taken with impunity: for we expose our life to his judgment, that he may revenge the wrong done to him; for his name, as it is sufficiently known, is profaned by perjuries. It now follows—

17. Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be

17. Tunc dixit Jeremias ad Zedechiam, Sic dicit Jehova, Deus exercituum, Deus Israel, Si egrediendo egressus fueris ad proceres regis Babylonis, vivet anima tua, et urbs ista non consumetur (non

burnt with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: incendetur) igni, sed vives tu et domus tua.

A question may be raised here, Whether God had again bidden his Prophet to repeat what he had so often spoken in vain? To this we cannot say anything certain, except that the probability is, that the Prophet did not open his mouth without being guided by the Holy Spirit. For though he had not received any new command, yet the Spirit of God influenced him, and ruled his tongue as well as his heart. We shall indeed presently find, that what was nigh at hand had been revealed to him; not what he had before, but it was added as a new confirmation of former doctrine. But this is only a probable conjecture; let then every one take his own view of the question.

That he might now gain credit to his answer, he prefaced it by saying, that he did not speak except from God's mouth. He had often declared this, having testified that what he said was made known to him by God. But it is not now known whether he had been bidden to repeat the same things; though it is certain that he did not make a wrong use of God's name, nor did he, without authority, assert that it was God's word. The Spirit, therefore, as I have said, was his guide and ruler, though we may grant that he did not receive any divine command.

He calls God, *the God of hosts, and the God of Israel.* By the first title he denotes the omnipotence of God; and by the second, the covenant which he had made with the Jews. He then did set forth the immeasurable power of God, that he might make Zedekiah to fear; for hypocrites, though they are constrained to dread God's name, yet afterwards do, in a manner, become hardened: it is therefore necessary to rouse them, as the Prophet did here. He then touched on the impiety of Zedekiah; for he not only professed himself to be one of God's elect people, but he was also the king and head; he ruled over the heritage of the Lord. And yet he did not believe any of the prophecies. There is therefore implied a reprobation, when the Prophet says, *the God of Israel.*

A mitigation of punishment is added, provided Zedekiah

willingly put his neck under the yoke. And it was no common mercy from God, that he could yet escape extreme punishment; for he was unworthy to be regarded by God, since for some years he had not attended to what he had heard from the mouth of Jeremiah, that he was to surrender himself, his people, and the city to the Chaldeans. He had refused, nay, he had been refractory and obstinate against God. We hence see, that he was unworthy of any alleviation; and yet God was still ready to forgive him, as to his life, provided he passed over, of his own accord, to the Chaldeans. And thus he was made more inexcusable, inasmuch as when he heard that God would be propitious if he submitted to due punishment, he was still unwilling to obey, as afterwards we shall see. And thus we see that Jeremiah had not said without reason, "If I give thee counsel, thou wilt not hear nor obey me;" for the event proved this. This is one thing. Then he said, *Thou shalt live;* and in the first place, he said, *Thy soul shall live;* and then, *This city shall not be burned, and thou shalt live;* and he repeated the words, *Thou shalt live, thou and thy house.* Now follows the threatening—

18. But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.

18. Si vero non egressus fueris ad proceres regis Babylonis, tradetur urbs ista in manum Chaldæorum, et exurent eam igni, et tu non evades e manu ipsorum.

The Prophet gave to the king the hope of pardon; not that he promised impunity, but that the king might at least hope that God would be merciful to him, if he anticipated his extreme vengeance. But as hypocrites are not easily moved when God allures them by the sweetness of his promises, hence a threatening is added, "Except thou deliverest thyself up," says the Prophet, "to the Chaldeans, thou shalt not escape, and the city shall be taken and burnt by the Chaldeans."

Zedekiah might have had hope in part, and thus have found the mercy which God offered to him. As he had profited nothing in this respect, it was necessary, in another way, to arouse him, by setting before him the destruction of the

city, and his own death. But he was not prevailed upon either by fear or by hope, to obey the advice of the Prophet. We hence see, that though he did not avowedly despise God, he was yet neither cold nor hot, but wished to be wholly spared. Hence then it was, that he rejected the favour offered to him by the Prophet. However his excuse follows—

19. And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me.

19. Et dixit rex Zedechias ad Jeremiam, Ego metuo (*vel*, crucior) ob Judæos qui defecerunt ad Chaldæos (*vel*, solitus sum, *vel*, timeo, et metuo Judæos ipsos,) ne forte tradant me in manum ipsorum, et contumelia me afficiant (*alii vertunt*, illudant mihi.)

Zedekiah seems here to have had a good reason why he should not immediately obey the Prophet. And often the best of the faithful openly set forth their anxieties, and we have seen that even the Prophet, when any apprehension of danger was entertained, sometimes mentioned it. It was not then a thing to be blamed, that Zedekiah ingenuously confessed that he was prevented by the fear of those who had revolted to the Chaldeans. For we know that subjects, having once cast off the yoke, and violated their pledged faith, conduct themselves in an insolent way; for they know that those to whom they have not performed their duty would be implacable to them. Zedekiah then was justly anxious, and his simplicity in explaining to the Prophet his fear, seemed worthy of an excuse, for he seemed to give some sign of obedience. But the event at length will shew us, that he was so bound by fear, that he refused the counsel of God and the Prophet. It often happens, as I have just said, that the faithful also fear, and thus vacillate or stand still, when God commands them anything hard and difficult, and they would willingly withdraw from the contest, but they at length obey God, and surrender their own thoughts, and submit in obedience to God. But Zedekiah so feared,[1] that he could not partake of God's goodness promised to him.

[1] The verb means trouble of mind or anxiety rather than fear, "I am disturbed with regard to the Jews," &c. The *Vulg.* is, "I am solicitous," and the *Targ.*, "I am anxious." Our version, "I am afraid of," is the *Syr.* The king seems to have been too proud to own that he had fear. The last clause in the verse may be thus rendered, "And they exult over

We hence see what the faithful have in common with the reprobate, and also how they differ from one another. At first the faithful fear as well as the unbelieving; they are anxious, they vacillate, and make known their perplexities: the unbelieving at the same time indulge themselves, and become hardened in their perverse purposes; but the faithful fight with themselves, and subject their thoughts to the will of God, and thus overcome fear by faith; they also crucify the flesh, and give themselves up wholly to God. We have seen the same thing before in the Prophet. But we shall now see the obstinacy of King Zedekiah, to which we have referred. Then Zedekiah feared lest the Jews, who had revolted to the Chaldeans, should treat him with insolence. The Prophet thus answered him—

20. But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver *thee*. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live.

21. But if thou refuse to go forth, this *is* the word that the Lord hath shewed me:

22. And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house *shall be* brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and those *women* shall say, Thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee; thy feet are sunk in the mire, *and* they are turned away back.

20. Tunc dixit Jeremias, Non tradent te, audi agedum vocem Jehovæ quam tibi profero (quam ego loquar ad te,) et tibi erit bene (tibi bene cedat,) et vivet anima tua:

21. Quod si tu abnueris ad egrediendum (*hoc est*, recusaveris egredi,) hic est sermo quem ostendit mihi Jehova;

22. Et ecce omnes mulieres, quæ relictæ fuerint in domo regis Jehudah egrediuntur ad proceres regis Babylonis, et ecce ipsæ dicent, Suaserunt tibi (*alii*, deceperunt te, *vel*, subduxerunt) et prævaluerunt tibi viri pacis tuæ; defixi sunt in luto pedes tui, conversi sunt retrorsum.

Here again Jeremiah strengthens Zedekiah, that he might not hesitate to make the trial, since God would yet give him pardon, so that at least his chastisement would be paternal and light. He then promised to Zedekiah that he would be safe from all the insults about which he was anxious. *They will not deliver thee*, he says; as though he had said, "Leave this to God's providence, resign thyself to God, and doubt not but that he will keep thee safe." God, in his kindness, as I have said, allows the faithful to cast their cares into his

me." The verb means to raise up or elevate one's self, and then the preposition ב means over, or against. The king was disturbed in his mind, being apprehensive of the taunts and insults of those already gone to the Chaldeans.—*Ed.*

bosom: but at the same time, if any disobey, when he confirms them, it is a sign of deliberate wickedness, and such perverseness extinguishes all the light of grace. Such was the stupidity of Zedekiah, that he did not accept of this second promise. He might indeed have confessed his fear, but he ought also to have received the remedy. The Prophet assured him that his life would be safe in God's hand; what more could he have wished? But this was said to no purpose, because fear fully occupied his mind, so that there was no entrance for the promise. Now this ought to be carefully noticed; for there are none of us whom many cares do not disturb, and many fears do not perplex; but a place ought to be given to a remedy. God succours us when he sees us distressed by anxious thoughts; but if fear so prevails, that all the promises by which God raises us up avail nothing, it is a sign of hopeless unbelief.

It afterwards follows, *Hear the voice of Jehovah, which I utter to you, that it may be well with thee, and that thy soul may live.* The promise is again added, to lead Zedekiah to submit more willingly to God. For though we know that we cannot escape his power, it will yet be dreaded by us, except he favours us with the promises of grace. In this way, then, the Prophet endeavoured to lead Zedekiah to render obedience to God: *Hear*, he says, *the voice of Jehovah, that it may be well with thee.* He shewed that it was yet in the power of Zedekiah to provide for his own safety, if only he obeyed the word of God. And this passage teaches us, that the Prophet had not spoken thoughtlessly and in vain, but under the guidance and teaching of God's Spirit. For though it may not have been, that he had received a new command, he yet knew that it was God's will, that he should confirm and reassert the previous oracles; for he did not falsely assume God's name, when he bade Zedekiah to hear God's voice which he had made known.

Now, though this discourse was especially directed to Zedekiah, we may yet conclude, that it is always for our good to embrace whatever God declares to us, though it may apparently be hard and unpleasant, as it was to Zedekiah; for it was by no means an agreeable thing to him to

deliver up himself to his enemies, to be deprived of his regal power, to be drawn into exile, and from a king to become a slave; and yet nothing was better for him, in order to save his life, than to obey God. Though, then, the words of God contain what is contrary and grievous to our flesh, yet let us feel persuaded that God always speaks what is good for our salvation. It would then have been well for Zedekiah, had he obeyed the counsel of the Prophet; for he would have found in captivity that God would be propitious to him, and this would have been an invaluable comfort; and then he might have been brought back from exile, at least he would have preserved the city and the Temple: but by his obstinacy he betrayed the city to his enemies, and hence it was also that the Temple was burnt.

He then adds, *If thou refuse to go forth, this is the word which God hath shewed to me.* Jeremiah again declares that Zedekiah resisted in vain, because he kicked, as it is said, against the goad, for he could not possibly escape from coming into the hand of his enemies; which, when done, then neither the city nor the Temple would be spared. But the Prophet repeats again, that it had been shewn to him what to speak. He then spoke not in his own name, but by God's command; which, it may be, was not then given him: but the Prophet knew that God's decree, of which he had been the herald, could not be abolished. He then says, that this word had been shewed to him by God, even what follows—

Behold, the women who as yet remain in the palace of the king, shall go forth to the princes of the king of Babylon, that is, having left the city they will betray thee to thine enemies; and they *shall say, The men of thy peace have deceived thee,* or persuaded thee, *and have prevailed; thus fixed in the mire are thy feet, and they have turned backward.* There is here a part stated for the whole, for under one thing is included the whole calamity of the city. We indeed know that the female sex do not stand in the ranks to fight, and that when a city is taken, women are commonly spared. When, therefore, the Prophet says, *Go forth shall women who are yet remaining in the king's palace,* it is the same

thing as if he had said, "Even the women shall be compelled to go forth to the enemies, and give themselves up into their power; what then will become of the men, when such shall be the hard condition of the women?"

We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet: *Go forth* then *shall women*, that is, when the city is taken, the women in the palace shall be drawn forth from their hiding-places, and be constrained to appear before their enemies. And then he adds, *and, behold, they shall say*, &c. He used the particle הִנֵּה, *ene*, twice, in order to lead Zedekiah into the very scene itself; for it is necessary thus to rouse those who are torpid in their apathy. *And, behold*, he says, *they will say*. Here Jeremiah declares that women would be witnesses to bear testimony to the folly of the king, and also to the wickedness and obstinacy of the princes, as though he had said, "Thou wilt not obey me to-day, and thy counsellors also pertinaciously resist; God has already pronounced judgment on you: ye despise and regard it as nothing: God will at length rouse up women, who will openly proclaim thy folly, O king, and the perverseness of thy counsellors, for having despised all the prophecies."

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou daily invitest us to repentance by constant exhortations, we may seriously reflect on thy goodness, and in due time return to thee and submit to thy will, and never refuse to undergo the punishment thou layest on us; and that we may not in the meantime so provoke thy extreme vengeance, as to find thee a rigorous judge, but ever experience, even under punishment, thy paternal mercy, until we shall at length come to the fulness of that joy which is laid up in heaven for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fiftieth.

We were obliged yesterday to break off where the Prophet said to King Zedekiah that women would be his judges, and that for a heavier reproach to him, because he refused to believe the oracles of God. Though the Prophet had often

exhorted him to repent, he had yet refused all his admonitions. Therefore Jeremiah here declares that he would have to bear the punishment he had deserved, even that the very women would openly speak of his folly and of the perfidy of all the princes. *They shall* then *say, They have persuaded* or seduced *thee,* as some read, and others, "have driven thee," which I should prefer, were it the common meaning, for it immediately follows, *and have prevailed over thee;* but we may simply take it in its proper sense, because they had perfidiously persuaded the king.

He calls them *the men of peace,* from whom acts of kindness might have been expected. We indeed know that friends and associates were thus called by the Hebrews. Peace does not only mean unity, but what is more, even friendship, such as ought to be between a king and his counsellors. Jeremiah, no doubt, sought in this case to try whether Zedekiah was yet capable of being recovered; for he foretells that women would announce this as from a judicial throne; but as I have said yesterday, and as we shall hereafter see, he spoke to the deaf.

It is then added, *Fixed are thy feet in the mire.* This is to be taken metaphorically. He might have secured his own life, had he passed over to the enemy, and thus a willing surrender might have been, as it were, the price for his liberation; but he chose rather to live in his own nest: and the Prophet says that this torpor would be like clay, in which he would lie fixed. What follows, *turned are they backward,* is, in my judgment, improperly applied to the princes. I read the words in connection with the former, *Fixed are thy feet in the clay, turned backward;* for everything happened to the king contrary to what he hoped.[1] It follows—

[1] Both the *Sept.* and the *Vulg.* take "fixed" in a transitive sense, "They have fixed" or caused to sink; and the last words are made to refer to the princes. As to the *Vulg.* the two clauses are, "They have sunk thy feet in the mire and in a slippery *place,* and have departed from thee." The *Syr.* as to the last clause is the same.

The whole matter is related as seen in a vision, given to the Prophet as he says in the previous verse,—

21. — this is the thing which Jehovah made me to see; and (*he said*) Behold the women, who have remained in the house of Judah, going

23. So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans: and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon; and thou shalt cause this city to be burnt with fire.

23. Et omnes uxores tuas et filios tuos deducent ad Chaldæos, et tu non evades e manu eorum, quia in manu regis Babylonis comprehenderis, et urbem hanc combures igni.

Jeremiah pursues the same subject; but he sets forth at large the calamity, that the king being at least frightened with horror, might submit to a right counsel; for when we hear that death is at hand, this indeed fills us with horror; and when many evils are mentioned, we must necessarily be roused; and this, no doubt, was what the Prophet looked for. Then he says that Zedekiah would come into the hands of his enemies, but he adds other indignities, which would bring greater bitterness, *They shall draw out,* he says, *all thy wives and thy children,* &c. Had Zedekiah been right-minded, he would have preferred to die a hundred times, and thus to have died for them all, than to have been the cause of so many evils. For we know that many have boldly exposed themselves to danger in defending the chastity of their wives; and doubtless such a reproach is far harder to be endured by ingenuous minds than a hundred deaths. We hence see what was the design of the Prophet; for he saw that Zedekiah could not be sufficiently roused by merely setting his own death before him, hence he added other circumstances, calculated to affect him still more, *They shall draw out,* he says, *thy wives and thy children.*

We hence learn how conjugal fidelity was then with impunity violated. It was, we know, an ancient evil, but it had now passed into general practice, so that it was, as it were, the common law: and yet what God had once established continued unchanged, even that every man should have only

forth to the princes of the king of Babylon, and behold them saying,—They have roused thee and prevailed over thee, *even* thy friends; sunk have they in the mire thy feet, they have run away from thee.

The scene, as seen in the vision, is presented to the king, the women going out and then speaking tauntingly to him. The princes roused or excited Zedekiah to break faith with the king of Babylon, and prevailed on him to do so. By so doing they sunk him as it were in the mire, that is, brought him to difficulties, and then ran away from him. And then in the next verse the Prophet confirms and explains the vision.—*Ed.*

his own wife. As, then, polygamy had so prevailed and had become so licentious among the Jews, we see that the fear of God was in fact extinguished and all regard to purity. More liberty was indeed allowed to kings, but they were not on that account to be excused, because their life ought to have been an example to others, a mirror of uprightness and chastity. When, therefore, they married a number of wives, it became an intolerable evil. And now when mention is made of *all the wives*, we conclude that the king had not only three or four wives or concubines, but a large number, that he might gratify his lust. Hence then we learn how great was the corruption of that age. It is also a wonder that the king was thus given to his lusts, and not brought back to some degree of moderation when necessity itself constrained him. We hence see that he must have been extremely insensible in retaining so many concubines, when his only city was hardly safe, and the whole country in the possession of enemies. But thus perverse men despise God and his scourges. For though all confess, according to the common proverb, that necessity is a mistress whom all are forced to obey, yet the greater part struggle with necessity itself, as we see was the case with Zedekiah, who refused to bend or turn, though very poor and miserable, and who suffered nothing of his royal pomp and splendour to be diminished. Hence it was that he had a large number of wives or concubines, as mentioned here.

It then follows, *This city shalt thou burn with fire.* It is certain that the torch was not applied by Zedekiah, nor was he the agent in the burning. But the Prophet reminded him that the cause of all the evils might justly be attributed to his obstinacy; as though he had said, that the Chaldeans would indeed be the authors of the burning, as they would with their own hands set the houses on fire, and yet that the first and the chief fault would be in Zedekiah himself, because he obstinately resisted God.[1]

[1] "And this city shall be burnt with fire," is the rendering of the *Sept.*, the *Syr.*, and the *Targ.* The *Vulg.* is, "and he (the king of Babylon) will burn this city with fire." The first, no doubt, is the true version of the Hebrew, except the verb be in *Hiphil*, according to our version, and also

But as to the women, this brief notice must be added: other kings, indeed, had been very dissolute; but God now applied the remedy when the court was purged from all its old filth. For with Jeconiah, we know, the royal dignity ceased; and the city was exposed to plunder; and yet some concubines remained; and these passed as by hereditary right to other kings, as they succeeded to the wives as to the kingdom. But when wickedness became incorrigible, all the concubines were taken away also. It was then a sign of final destruction. It follows—

24. Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die.

24. Et dixit Zedechias ad Jeremias, Vir nesciat (*hoc est*, nemo sciat) de sermonibus istis, et non morieris (*hoc est*, ne moriaris.)

Here is seen the miserable condition of the king. Had he no faith in the answer of Jeremiah, he would not have thus feared. But he acknowledged that what he had heard from the mouth of the Prophet was true. In the meanwhile he delayed and extended time as far as he could, and chose rather to spend his life in trembling than to be immediately freed from all care and anxiety. This was by no means to act like a king; for had he any courage, he would not have waited to the last hour. We indeed know that men of courage boldly meet death, when they see no hope of honour remaining. Zedekiah had lost his authority; he held indeed the title of a king, but he was without power; for he was compelled servilely to obey his counsellors; and now he feared his own shadow, and yet protracted time, as I have said, as much as he could; and on this account he requested the Prophet, that this conversation might remain as buried.

By saying, *thou shalt not die*, he did not threaten the Prophet, but intimated that silence would not be less a benefit to Jeremiah than to himself: "Thou wilt rouse the fury of all against thyself, if thou speakest of this interview, for no one can bear to hear anything of the ruin of the city: if then thou consultest thine own benefit, say not a word of this, and let it not come to the people nor to my counsellors."

that of *Blayney;* but what corresponds best with the passage is the former rendering.—*Ed.*

Under the colour of an advice then he said to Jeremiah, "*See lest thou die.*"[1] He therefore did not speak threateningly.

25. But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee:

26. Then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king, that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there.

25. Et si audierint proceres quod loquutus fuerim tecum, et venerint ad te, et dixerint tibi, Expone (*vel*, narra) nunc nobis quod loquutus fueris ad regem, ne celes a nobis (*hoc est*, ne celes nos quicquam,) et non occidemus te, et quid locutus sit tecum rex:

26. Et tunc, (*copula enim resolvi debet in adverbium temporis*, tunc) dices illis, Prostravi ego preces meas coram facie regis (*hoc est*, suppliciter deprecatus sum regem,) ne reduceret me in domum Jonathan, ut morerer illic.

Here again Zedekiah shews his anxiety, lest Jeremiah should be apprehended, were the princes unexpectedly to assail him; for he might in this respect have stumbled, though admonished. Then the king intimated to him what to answer, in case the counsellors came to him and made inquiry respecting their intercourse. He then advised him simply to say, that he *entreated* him not to send him back to the filthy pit, where he almost perished. The miserable servitude of the king appears now still evident; for he feared his own counsellors, lest they should revolt from him. He might easily have made a spontaneous surrender of himself, but he dared not, lest he should be killed by them in a tumult; and yet, on the other hand, he feared lest the princes should despise him, and so redeem themselves by the sacrifice of his life.

We see in what straits he was, but God rendered to him a just recompense for his obstinacy. It was indeed a miserable thing to hear that the king was thus oppressed on every side, but the cause of all this ought ever to be borne in mind; which was, that he had despised God and his Prophet. He then deserved to be in this state of anxiety, to fear death on

[1] The words literally are, "Let no man know of these words, and thou shalt not die." Such is the rendering of the *Sept.*, the *Vulg.*, and the *Targ.*; the *Syr.* is, "lest thou die;" which suggests the view taken by *Calvin.—Ed.*

every side, and not to be able to extricate himself from those cares and perplexities which tormented him.

Let us then learn to cast all our cares on God, so that our life may be safe, and that we may have calm and tranquil minds: otherwise what is written in the Law must necessarily happen to us, "Our life will hang on a thread, so that we shall say in the morning, Who will give us to see the evening? and in the evening, How can we live to the morning?" (Deut. xxviii. 66, 67.) Lest then the same thing happen to us as to this miserable king, let us learn to recumb on God, for this is the only way to obtain peace.

For though Zedekiah set before Jeremiah the danger which he might bring on himself, if he confessed what took place between them, he yet had a regard no doubt to his own safety, for his care for the Prophet was not very great. *If, then*, he says, *the princes will hear that I have spoken to him*, &c. We see here, that as kings very curiously inquire into the sayings and actions of all, so they in their turn are exposed to innumerable spies, who observe all their secret proceedings. Zedekiah, as we have already seen, left his palace, sought some secret place, and at the third entrance called to him Jeremiah. This place might be deemed in some measure secret, yet he knew that he was observed even by his own servants.

Thus kings, while they seek immoderate splendour, renounce the main good, which ought to be preferred to all other things. For it is commonly said that liberty is an invaluable gift, and it is very true: but were we to seek for liberty among mankind, we should by no means find it in courts; for all there are slaves, and slavery begins with the most elevated. Kings, then, while they thus seek from their height to look down on all mankind, are placed, as it were, in a theatre, and the eyes of all turn to them, so that no liberty remains for them; and they who hang on their favour are also in constant fear. This, then, ought to be noticed by us; for there is no one who does not seek splendour; but yet we know how anxious is the life of princes. Their external appearance is indeed very flattering; but we do not see what inward torments harass them. When, there-

fore, it is said of Zedekiah, that he could not have a secret conference, it hence appears that kings are by no means free.

He says, "Though they promise thee impunity, trust them not." Zedekiah feared lest the Prophet should be too credulous, and should freely relate to the counsellors what he had said. But he no doubt had reflected on the fact, that the Prophet had already announced the destruction of the city. He then could have hardly hoped for the silence which he required. Hence then it was, that he so earnestly bid him to be careful; and though the counsellors should promise that there would be no danger to him, he yet bade him to be silent. *Say to them,* he said, *I humbly prayed the king not to send me back to the house of Jonathan, that I might not die there.* It was not indeed a falsehood, but this evasion cannot be wholly excused. The Prophet justly feared, and, as we have before seen, he was perplexed and anxious, for that prison was horrible, and it would have been better at once to die than to have been thus buried alive in the earth. But it is certain that he did not come to the king for this purpose, for he had been sent for. Though, then, the Prophet did not expressly or in so many words say what was false, yet it was a kind of falsehood; and what follows, in reference to himself, cannot be excused.

27. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him: and he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they left off speaking with him; for the matter was not perceived.

27. Et venerunt cuncti proceres ad Jeremiam, et interrogarunt ipsum; et annuntiavit illis (*hoc est,* narravit illis) secundum sermones istos, quemadmodum præceperat rex, et siluerunt ab eo, quia sermo non fuit auditus.

Here, indeed, the Prophet confesses that he did as the king had commanded him; but he does not commend what he had done. There is no doubt but that on the one hand he placed before his eyes the timidity of the king, who, being forgetful of plain dealing, slavishly feared his own counsellors; and that, on the other hand, he manifested that he was not sufficiently discreet, for when the princes came, even if he wished not to deceive them, he yet concealed the main thing, and said that he went to the king to pray for his own life, which was not true. Though then what he said was in

part true, that he prayed not to be sent back to prison, yet he could not by this evasion be wholly exempted from blame.

In short, we see that even God's servants have sometimes spoken evasively, when oppressed with extreme fear; and thus we are reminded to seek of God magnanimity of mind and resolute firmness: for he alone can strengthen and sustain us when we are terrified by any fear of danger.

He says, that he *did as the king had commanded him;* but he ought rather to have hearkened to God's word, in which simplicity is enjoined. It is also said, that the princes *were silent*, that is, departed in silence; for no one had been a witness to the conference, and the matter had not spread farther: for the king was silent through fear, and the Prophet also had not made known the secret interview. Hence it was that the princes departed, and thought that the matter was as represented. In short, Jeremiah intimates that they were deceived by this pretext. It follows at last,—

28. So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken: and he was *there* when Jerusalem was taken.

28. Et habitavit Jeremias in atrio custodiæ, usque ad diem quo capta fuit Jerusalem; et accidit secundum quod capta fuit Jerusalem.

Some render the last words simply thus, "And it happened that Jerusalem was taken;" and others, "It happened accordingly that Jerusalem was taken;" but this seems unnatural. Others take the relative as a demonstrative pronoun, and of this I approve, "For it happened that according to this Jerusalem was taken."

He first says that he *dwelt in the court of the prison.* It hence appears that he was not even then at liberty; for though the king wished him to be free, yet he dared not to release him. This is one thing. Then he says, that he *was there until the day the city was taken.* We shall hereafter see that he was saved by the king's command, and was brought out of prison. He was, then, until that day in the court of the prison, as though he had said, that he was a prisoner until the king wa taken prisoner, together with his counsellors, and also until the day the whole city was taken. And here we may see, as in a vivid form, the wonderful judgment of God. As long as the Jews boasted

that they offered sacrifices to God, they kept Jeremiah shut up in prison, so that he was not a free man until the king was taken, the city perished, and almost all were driven into exile. I have no doubt but that he added the following by way of explanation, *And it happened that according to this Jerusalem was taken;* that is, he reminds readers in these words, that he had not been a false Prophet, but a true and faithful witness as to God's judgment, for all his prophecies were verified by the event.[1] He then says that the city was taken, not by chance, but because God had so declared. He now begins to narrate historically the destruction and the burning of the city. He therefore says,—

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1. In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it.

2. *And* in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up.

1. Anno nono Zedechiæ regis Jehudah, mense decimo venit Nebuchadnezer rex Babylonis et totus exercitus ejus Jerosolymam, et obsiderunt eam.

2. In undecimo anno Zedechiæ, mense quarto, nona mensis, disrupta fuit urbs.

Jeremiah seems here indeed to undertake the office of an historian rather than that of a Prophet; but he seals his previous prophecies, and at the same time shews that he had brought forward nothing rashly or thoughtlessly. There is, then, here a proof of all his former doctrine; he brings before us the reality, and shews that whatever he had predicted was accomplished by God's hand, and in a manner almost incredible. We now understand what this chapter contains.

He says that King Nebuchadnezzar *came*, though he soon departed from the siege, for, as we shall presently see, he

[1] These words are left out in the *Sept.* and the *Syr.* The *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* give this version, "And it came to pass that Jerusalem was taken;" which seems not in this connection to have any meaning. Some connect them with the following chapter, but improperly. Our version, followed by *Blayney*, gives the best sense, "And he was *there* (that is, in the court of the prison) when Jerusalem was taken:" He was there not only *to* the day or time of its capture, but during that time. This was added to shew that he was not released by the Jews, but by those who took the city.—*Ed.*

went to Riblah, which, as some think, was the Antioch of Syria; but of this we shall speak in its proper place. When, therefore, the king came with his army, he soon departed, and his purpose was to live at leisure, and in the enjoyment of pleasures as long as the city was besieged. He was not disposed to undertake the trouble and weariness of a long warfare; but yet, in order to spread more terror, he came himself to the city and gave instructions to his army.

We must notice the time: he came *in the ninth year, in the tenth month*, that is about the end of the year. Zedekiah, no doubt, entertained a good hope, though reports were flying as to the coming of the Chaldean army; for the king had not so soon prepared for the war as he ought to have done. He thought that his revolt from the king of Babylon would be passed by unpunished. But the Prophet here reminds us that it was a false confidence; for though God spared him for a time and suspended his judgment, he yet at length punished the impiety of his revolt, to which was also added ingratitude, as it has been before stated. Thus much as to *the ninth year and the tenth month.*

It then follows, *In the eleventh year, in the fourth month, the city was broken up.* We hence see that the city was besieged for a year and half; for there was the whole of the tenth year, and then added must be two months of the ninth year, and four months of the eleventh year; and thus a year and half was the whole time. Here also we must remember how much the Jews must have suffered; for were a city at this day to bear a siege for a few months, it would appear a rare instance of valour; but Jerusalem was besieged for a year and half. Let us now consider what number of people must have been there, and we have seen that the Prophet threatened them with famine. And how much scarcity there was in the city, the Prophet has not only testified elsewhere, but in the book of Lamentations he has shewed most fully. (Lam. iv. 10.) And there was not only famine, but it was followed by pestilence. We hence learn how ferocious must have been the character of the king, that he could see miserable men perishing by scores, and yet persist in his obstinacy. Nor is there a doubt but that the people were

also on their part obstinate, and became at length stupified through their sufferings; for there was hardly one, from the least to the greatest, who did not despise what the Prophet taught; and thus they were all blinded by madness and stupidity.

It ought to be noticed that they bore a siege for a year and six months, and that they were not even then persuaded to surrender themselves, until the city was broken up, that is, until the walls were beaten down by battering-rams and other warlike engines; for the city was broken when the wall, beaten by the engines, fell down. In short, the city was gained by storm; this is what is meant, and will hereafter be more fully expressed. But I cannot proceed further now.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are surrounded by so many dangers, and bring on ourselves daily, through our sins, so many miseries,—O grant, that we may at least yield to thy threatenings, and learn in due time to seek thy favour and to anticipate thy judgment, and so to humble ourselves under thy mighty hand, that we may find thee propitious to us miserable sinners, who flee to thy mercy, until, having at length been freed from all our sins, we shall appear before thy tribunal, and there receive the reward of our faith, even that blessed immortality, which thine only-begotten Son, our Lord, has procured for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-First.

3. And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, *even* Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon.

4. And it came to pass, *that* when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls: and he went out the way of the plain.

3. Et ingressi sunt omnes duces regis Babylonis, et sederunt in porta media, Neregal, Sarezer, Samegar, Nebusarzechin Rabsaris, Neregal, Sarezer, Rabmag, et residuum ducum (*hoc est*, et alii duces) regis Babylonis.

4. Et factum est cum vidisset eos Zedechias rex Jehudah, et omnes viri militares, tunc aufugerunt, et egressi sunt ex urbe noctu per viam horti regis ad portam inter duos muros, et egressus est per viam deserti.

It is proved here that the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled; so that it became really evident that he had not

spoken unadvisedly, but from the mouth of God. And thus was fulfilled also what is said as a common proverb, that fools become wise too late; for they never obey good and wise counsels while they may, but at length they are made to know by their own miseries and their teacher, experience, that what they despised is true, but without any benefit. This happened to Zedekiah, who had been often exhorted by the Prophet to surrender himself to King Nebuchadnezzar. As, then, he had obstinately refused the yoke, he was at length constrained to reap the fruit of his obstinacy.

Now Jeremiah says, that *the princes* of King Nebuchadnezzar, that is, those he had set over his forces, *entered the city*, the wall being broken down, and *sat in the middle gate*; for it was necessary for them to be wary, lest there should be ambushes; and even conquerors do not immediately penetrate into every part when a city is taken, but search whether all the places be free from enemies. This then was done by the leaders of the army, for they stood in *the middle gate*, that they might exercise authority over the city, and yet be safe from all ambushes. Jeremiah mentions some of them by name, but it is uncertain whether he adds a surname to some of them. But as this is doubtful and is of no great moment, it is enough for us that the chief of the leaders are named, in order to accredit the narrative.

He then adds, *After Zedekiah saw them*, &c.; not that he came to that part, but after he understood that that part of the city was occupied by the enemies; for matters then had come to an extremity. *Then he fled with his men of war.* And here is set before us a sad spectacle: men in no way trained up for war were left in the city, women also and children were left there, while the men of war fled, inasmuch as their condition was worse, because they had delayed the taking of the city. It was then according to what is commonly done, that they fled. We yet see that ungodly men, after having long despised heavenly truth, flee in time of danger, and are so filled with terror, that they cast themselves headlong into many perils. This is a just reward to those who are not terrified by the threatenings of God, but

become so hardened, that they too late acknowledge that they ought to have feared; and being, as it were, stunned, they see not what is expedient, and cannot follow any fixed course.

The Prophet adds, that they fled *in the night*, and that they *went out by the way of the king's garden*, and lastly, that they came to the *gate* which was *between the two walls*. There is in this passage nothing superfluous; for he meant to shew us, that though the king thought that he could escape from the hands of his enemies, he was yet taken, as God had predicted. For, if after the city was taken, he had come as a suppliant, of his own accord, he might probably have obtained mercy; and this counsel, we know, was given while the state of things was not yet desperate; but he put no faith in God's word. In the meantime he thought that he could disappoint his enemies, if he quickly fled through some secret way. Some think that there was a subterranean passage, which had a door in the middle of the garden, and had also an egress at the other end in the plain of Jericho, as we shall hereafter see. And that region was barren, and therefore solitary. Hence the king entertained confidence; but he found, at length, how certain was prophetic truth; for it is said afterwards, that the Chaldeans followed and took him. But this circumstance, as I have said, ought to be carefully observed, that the king, as the Prophet tells us, fled through a secret way, during the darkness of the night, and escaped. It now follows—

5. But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah, in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him.

5. Et persecuti sunt exercitus Chaldæorum ipsos, et apprehenderunt Zedechiam in desertis Jericho (*alii vertunt*, in planicie, *et fuit planicies; cæterum ut dixi, inculta, et squalida et vacua etiam incolis;*) et tulerunt ipsum, et adduxerunt ad Nebuchadnezer regem Babylonis Riblathah (urbem) in terra Chemath, qui locutus est cum ipso judicia.

The Chaldeans pursued the fugitive king, no doubt, through a hidden impulse from above. It is, indeed, probable that he was betrayed by his own people; and this

often happens in a disturbed state of things; but however, he might have escaped, had he not been given up by the hand of God. These things are therefore narrated, that we may know that the ungodly, by their evasions, gain no other thing than really to acknowledge that God is true in his threatenings as well as in his promises. They believe not his word, it is therefore necessary that they should be convinced by actual experience. Zedekiah then is here set before us as an example, so that we may know that as soon as God announces any calamity, we ought to tremble and to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, for he holds us on every side completely shut up, so that if hiding places and refuges be open before us, they can yet avail us nothing.

The Prophet then tells us, that he was *taken in the deserts of Jericho*. This circumstance also is important, for he had gone forth beyond the sight of men, even into solitude; for that plain was not so fruitful as to support many inhabitants, but it was as it were a desert. It is then a wonder how the Chaldeans found him in that solitude, but they had God, as it were, as their guide. Hence then it was, that Zedekiah fell into the hands of the Chaldean army. The Prophet adds, that they *brought him into Riblah*, which is thought to have been Antioch. It is also called Hemath; but this name designated the country and not the city. And yet in Amos vi. 2, it means the city, when it is said, "Go to Calneh, go to Hemath the great." But it may be, that the dignity of the city was the reason why the country was so called; and no doubt Pliny, in his fifth book, calls that part of Syria Antiochean; and as to what he says shortly before, that Antioch was that part of Syria toward Cilicia, that place seems to me to have been corrupted. I rather read thus, that it was a part of Syria, for, as I have said, he calls it Antiochean. And it was not unsuitable that the city should be called Hemath and Riblah, and that the name of the city should be given to the country. Interpreters indeed agree, that Riblah was Antioch. Jerome says, that in his day, the first station towards Chaldea still retained its ancient name, though, by changing some letters, they called it Emmaus. But he doubts not but it was An-

tioch, which was formerly called Epidaphne, and had also the name of Hemath. There then Zedekiah was *brought to Nebuchadnezzar, who spoke judgments with him*, that is, who brought him as a criminal before his tribunal, that he might pronounce sentence upon him; for to speak judgments means the same as to minister justice or to pass judgment.

Now this was very inconsistent with royal dignity, for though, as a conqueror, he was angry with his enemy, he might yet have been content with his death alone. Kings are not wont to deal in this way with kings, for they respect themselves, and are not disposed to degrade royal dignity. But Jeremiah says, that Zedekiah was by no means dealt with royally; for he was constrained to plead guilty, and was condemned by a solemn sentence. Then to speak judgments is the same as what we call in French *former proces criminel*. And this indignity increased the weight of his calamity and his punishment; for Zedekiah not only had to bear many reproaches, while the king of Babylon expostulated with him, but he was also brought to judgment, so that punishment, according to the common practice, was allotted to him. For Nebuchadnezzar had made him king, and imposed tribute on him. He therefore condemned him as guilty of perfidy and perjury. This is the degradation which the Prophet points out, when he says, that he spoke judgments with him, or acted towards him judicially; and he repeats the same expression in the last chapter. It follows—

6. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah.

6. Et occidit rex Babylonis filios Zedechiæ in Riblathah coram oculis ejus; et omnes nobiles Jehudah occidit rex Babylonis.

It is probable that Nebuchadnezzar continued in that pleasant city while Jerusalem was attacked, for he would not endure the weariness of a long siege, and he also wished to be far away from danger. It was enough for him that his generals, of whom mention is made, fought under his banner. Nebuchadnezzar then was beyond the reach of danger, and yet he filled the Jews with terror, because he did not return home, or to the principal seat of government, but remained

in the neighbourhood; for the Antioch of Syria was not far from Judea.

The Prophet now tells us how cruelly Nebuchadnezzar acted towards Zedekiah. It was surely a sad spectacle to see a king, who had been before in repute, who was of a noble family, who was a type of Christ, lying prostrate at the feet of a proud conqueror. But much more bitter to him than this, was to see his own sons killed before his eyes. It would have been better for him to die a hundred times than to be compelled to witness that slaughter. He was, however, compelled to do so. And then, that all hope might be cut off, all those who excelled in dignity and power were slain. For under the name princes, Jeremiah generally included the chief men; so that all who had any name among the people were killed. It was a horrible carnage! not only the king's sons were slain, but all who were capable of restoring the city and the land to a better condition. Thus Nebuchadnezzar wished to take away every hope, by putting to death the royal family and all the nobles. It afterwards follows—

7. Moreover, he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon.

7. Et oculos Zedechiæ excæcavit, et vinxit eum cathenis (*in duali numero*, duabus cathenis,) ut adduceret ipsum Babylonem.

Here was an accumulation of misery: the king had his eyes pulled out,[1] after having been a spectator of the slaughter of his own sons! He then saw heaped together the dead bodies of his own offspring and of all his nobles. After that slaughter he was made blind. His life was, no doubt, prolonged to him, that he might die, as it were, by little and little, according to what a notorious tyrant has said. And thus Nebuchadnezzar intended to kill him a hundred and a thousand times, and not at once to put him to death, for death removes man from all the miseries of the present life. That Zedekiah remained alive, was then a much harder condition.

[1] The *pulling out* of his eyes is derived from the *Vulg.*; the other versions and the *Targ.* express literally the Hebrew, "And he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah." And the custom was to hold before them red-hot iron. It seems also that they practised in the East the horrible custom of pulling out the eyes. But to blind the eyes must have been a different form of barbarity.—*Ed.*

And this has been recorded that we may know, that as he had been so long obstinate against God, the punishment inflicted on him was long protracted; for he had not sinned through levity or want of thought, or some hidden impulse, but hardened himself against every truth and all counsels. It was therefore just that he should die by little and little, and not be killed at once. This was the reason why the king of Babylon pulled out his eyes.

The Prophet says in the last place, that he was *bound with chains*, and that he was in this miserable condition *led into Babylon*. This reproach was an addition to his blindness: he was bound with chains as a criminal. It would have been better for him to have been taken immediately to the gallows, or to have been put to death in any way; but it was the design of Nebuchadnezzar, that he should lead a miserable life in this degraded state, and be a public example of what perfidy deserved. It follows,—

8. And the Chaldeans burnt the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

8. Et domum regis et domum populi combusserunt Chaldæi igni, et muros Jerusalem diruerunt.

Here also the Prophet shews that whatever he had predicted was fulfilled, so that nothing was wanting to render faith sure and fixed. He had said, as we have seen, that if Zedekiah surrendered himself of his own accord, the houses in the city would not be burnt. Zedekiah thought this all vain, or at least he closed up his ears. He now heard, though he was blind, that God had declared nothing in vain by the mouth of Jeremiah; for his palace was burnt, and also all the other houses.

He put בֵּית, *bith*, in the second clause, the singular for the plural; and so there is here an enallage, for it was not only one house of the people that was burnt, but the fire consumed all the houses. We at last come to the walls, which were beaten down; and thus the city was destroyed as Jeremiah had predicted. It follows,—

9. Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the rem-

9. Residuum vero populi qui superstites erant in urbe, et elapsos (*hoc est*, defectores,) qui defecerant ad ipsum

nant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.

(*nempe*, ad Nebuchadnezer,) et residuum populi qui relicti fuerant (qui fuerant superstites, *idem nomen repetitur*) transtulit Nabuzardan princeps interfectorum Babylonem.

The Prophet now relates also what happened to others, even those who remained in the city, and whom Nebuchadnezzar and his army had spared: he says that they were *brought to Babylon.* There were those who had fled and went over to the Chaldeans before the city was taken; for we have seen that so great was the despair of many, that they revolted, and those were they whom Zedekiah chiefly feared, lest he should be, as we have seen, an object of mockery to them, had he gone to the Chaldeans and made a willing surrender. Jeremiah now says that those also were led into Chaldea. Nebuchadnezzar might have removed them on this account, because he could not confide in traitors. He had found out their inconstancy, for they had revolted from their own real and legitimate king. As then they had thus once violated their faith, he could not but regard them with suspicion, and therefore removed them, lest they should afterwards attempt something new, and create disturbance; or, it may be, that it was done according to their request, because they feared lest, after the departure of the Chaldeans, the common people should rage against them, as they had helped the enemies, and thus had become perfidious and ungrateful towards their own country. It might then be, that they themselves had made this request, and that it was granted them: they might then live quietly in a far country, but they could not be safe in Judea. However, whatever may have been the reason, Jeremiah tells us, that they were led with the rest into Babylon and Chaldea.

He afterwards names the head or general of the army, even *Nebuzaradan*, whom he calls the *prince* of the killers, or of the cooks. The Greek translators have rendered it ἀρχιμάγειρον, the prince of the cooks, who at this day is called Grand Master in the courts of princes. But their opinion is more probable, who render the words, the prince of the killers. The verb טבח, *thebech*, means to slay, to kill, and to kill men as well as to slay beasts; and for this reason

some have applied it to cookery. But as Nebuzaradan is mentioned here as the chief among military men, the probability is that he was the judge of all capital offences in the army.[1] Hence Jeremiah names him when he says that they were *removed who remained in the city.*

But there seems to be here an unnecessary repetition, as he mentions twice, *the rest of the people which remained.* There is, however, a difference, for in the first clause he says, *in the city.* He then means those who had been besieged, and whom Nebuchadnezzar had pardoned so as not to put them to death. The last clause embraces more, even all the inhabitants of the land; for there were many scattered abroad, on whom Nebuchadnezzar might have vented his rage, but he removed them as slaves into Chaldea. Then our Prophet speaks here of these two parties, for he says that there were some remaining in the city, and that others were remaining, even those who were found scattered through various parts of the country, and had not been besieged by the Chaldean army. He afterwards adds,—

10. But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

10. Et ex populo pauperes, quibus nihil quicquam erat, reliquos fecit Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, in terra Jehudah, et dedit illis vites et agros in die isto.

He now adds, that some were left to inhabit the land, even *the poor and those who had nothing.* He says that these were made, as it were, the lords of the land when the Chaldeans returned into their own country. We here see that poverty is often an advantage, for the nobles, as we have seen, were killed, and many also of the middle class were killed in the siege of the city, and some of them were treated a little more humanely. Still the exiles were miserable, and driven to a distant land without any hope of return. The land was now left to the poor alone; and those who possessed not a foot of ground before, lived now very comfortably; for

[1] The *Vulg.* is, "the chief of the soldiers—magister militum;" the *Targ.*, "the prince of the slayers;" the *Syr.*, "the prince of the attendants, *or* guards." The best rendering would be, "the chief of the executioners." The guards, the royal attendants, were commonly the executioners. See 1 Sam. xxii. 17; Mark vi. 27.—*Ed.*

they were not so large a number, but that each of them had some extent of land, as we shall hereafter see. While then these miserable men, who before lived very scantily, and perhaps begged their bread, while these remained secure in the land of Judah, the possessors of the land were torn away and driven into exile; and as Nebuzaradan had assigned to each of them vineyards and fields, it hence appears how much better it was for them to have suffered hunger for a time, to have been in an ignoble condition, and to have been trodden as it were under foot by others, than to have lived in pomp and splendour. Thus often God shews his care for us, when he suffers us not to rise high, but keeps us in an obscure and humble condition; and the issue at length proves that he thus had a regard for our salvation.

At the same time there is here set before our eyes a woful change. The king is led bound in chains, and is also blind; and all the rest having left their own, are driven into exile; and, on the other hand, the poor alone, and needy men who had nothing, dwell at large, as it were, in their own possessions. As, then, they had their quiet habitations and large fields, and enjoyed a land so fertile and rich, there is no doubt but that Nebuzaradan meant thus to rouse the envy of the exiles; for they saw that needy and worthless men dwelt in that land from which they had been banished. Hence their indignation was increased when they saw that they were more severely and cruelly treated than those lowest of men. It follows,—

11. Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, saying,

12. Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.

11. Præcepit autem Nabuchadnezer rex Babylonis de Jeremia per manum Nabuzardan principis interfectorum, dicendo,

12. Tolle ipsum et oculos tuos pone super eum, et ne facias ei quicquam mali; sed prout loquutus fuerit tecum fac cum eo.

The Prophet now sets forth the paternal care of God, which he had experienced in the preservation of his life and safety. The innocent, we know, are often killed in a tumult, and the storming of cities is turbulent, so that many things are done without any thought; nay, even the leaders are

not able to moderate the excesses of the victorious. When, therefore, the Chaldeans burnt the palace, Jeremiah might have perished at the same time, being suffocated by the very smoke of the fire. We know what happened at the taking of Syracuse. Marcellus did not wish that Archimedes should perish, nay, he commanded that he should be preserved; for he wished to save that man on account of his singular industry and noble genius. However, while he was drawing circles on the ground, he was killed by a common soldier. If no one had come to Jeremiah, he might, as I have said, have been buried under the ruins of the palace, when the king's court was burnt down. But he says that he had been wonderfully preserved, for *Nebuchadnezzar had given a command respecting him*, that he might not be exposed to any trouble, but that Nebuzaradan as well as the whole army should secure his safety.

It is indeed probable that the king of Babylon had heard of Jeremiah; and though he was in prison, yet the Word of God, which he boldly proclaimed, was not bound. Then the report of this might have reached the king of Babylon: and hence it was, that he was disposed to preserve him; for he had given a faithful counsel to Zedekiah. But Nebuchadnezzar no doubt regarded only his own advantage; and hence we ought to bear in mind the wonderful goodness of God in preserving, as it were, by his own hand, the life of the Prophet; so that in extremities no one touched him, but he remained free and quiet, as we shall hereafter see. But we must put off the rest until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, omnipotent God, that since thou hast once given us so awful a proof of thy wrath in the destruction of that city, which thou didst choose, and in which thou hadst had thy holy habitation,—O grant, that we may learn so to submit to thee in true humility and obedience, that we may not provoke thy extreme displeasure, but on the contrary anticipate it by real repentance, and that being terrified by thy threatenings, we may so submit ourselves to thee as to obtain thy mercy, and thus to regard thee as a Father, ever propitious to all those who flee to thee through Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Second.

13. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rab-saris, and Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, and all the king of Babylon's princes;

13. Et misit Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, et Nebusazban, Rabsaris (*diximus quosdam has voces interpretari, quod sit princeps eunuchus, sed aliis magis placere esse proprium nomen, quos ego sequor*) et Neregal, Sarezer, Rabmag, et alii principes Regis Babel (Babylonis:)

14. Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

14. Miserunt (inquam) et tulerunt Jeremiam ex atrio custodiæ, et dederunt eum (*hoc est*, commiserunt eum) Godoliæ filio Achikam, filii Saphan, ut deduceret eum domum; et ita habitavit in medio populi.

HERE Jeremiah completes what we began yesterday to expound, even that by the command of King Nebuchadnezzar he was delivered from prison. But we have said, that though that heathen king had regard to his own interest, yet his mind was ruled by the secret power of God, who thus designed to rescue his servant from death; for God is wont thus to work even by the ungodly, who have another thing in view. It is not always by a voluntary act that men serve God, for many execute what God has decreed when they have no intention of doing so: and he so turns and drives them here and there, that they are constrained, willing or unwilling, to obey his authority. Thus, then, it was that Nebuchadnezzar liberated Jeremiah.

And yet the Prophet fully believed that he did not owe his life to King Nebuchadnezzar, but that he had been in a wonderful manner preserved by God's favour; and to shew this is the design of the whole narrative.

He says, that the king had sent all the leaders of the Chaldean army to take him out of the court of the prison, and that he was then delivered to the care of Gedaliah, not that he might be watched as usual, but because the princes knew that the people had entertained hatred towards the holy Prophet, and therefore wished him to be preserved safe from all violence. This then was the reason why they committed him to the keeping of Gedaliah, who, as we shall

hereafter see, was in favour with the Chaldeans and highly esteemed.

He adds in the last place, that he *dwelt in the midst of the people:* by which expression is set forth complete liberty, as we say in our language, *aller et venir.* He then says that he was in the midst of the people, because he had been before shut up in prison. It now follows—

15. Now the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

16. Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be *accomplished* in that day before thee.

17. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord; and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou *art* afraid.

18. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee; because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.

15. Ad Jeremiam vero fuit sermo Jehovæ, quum adhuc esset clausus in atrio custodiæ, dicendo,

16. Vade et dic Ebedmeleoh Æthiopi (*hoc est,* alloquere Ebedmelech, dicendo,) Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Ecce adduco sermones meos super urbem hanc in malum, et non in bonum; et erunt coram facie tua in die illo:

17. Et eripiam te in die illo, dicit Jehova, et non traderis in manum hominum, a quorum facie tu expavescis (*ad verbum est,* quos tu expavescis ab eorum facie;)

18. Quia liberando liberabo te, in gladium non cades, et erit tibi anima tua in spolium, quia sperasti in me, dicit Jehova.

The Prophet tells us here that God was not unmindful of that Ethiopian, by whom he had been preserved, though he was an alien and from a barbarous nation. We have seen, however, that he alone undertook the cause of the Prophet, when others, being terrified by fear, did not exert themselves, or were avowedly enemies to God's servant. Ebedmelech then alone dared to go forth in a case so hopeless, and undertook the defence of the holy man. The Prophet says now that this service was so acceptable, that it would not be without its reward. We have said that Ebedmelech had thus manifested his concern for the Prophet's life, but not without evident danger; for he knew that the princes were united against him, and that these ungodly men had drawn to their side the greatest part of the court and also of the common people. Then Ebedmelech roused against himself both high and low; but God aided him, so that he was not

overpowered by his adversaries. In his very danger he experienced the favour of God, and was protected and delivered from danger.

But now he finds that he had not ill employed his exertions; for he had not only been humane and merciful towards a mortal man, but had also done service for God; for whatever we do for God's servants, he acknowledges as done to himself, and will have it to be laid to his account, according to what Christ says, "He who gives a cup of cold water to one of the least of my disciples, shall not lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) There is then no doubt but that the Spirit of God intended by the example of Ebedmelech to rouse us to the duties of humanity, even to teach us to succour the miserable, and to give them help as far as we can, and not to shun the hatred of men or any dangers, which we may thereby incur. And as we are torpid and negligent in doing good, the reward given to the Ethiopian is set before us, so that we may know, that though nothing is to be hoped from men, when we are kind and liberal, yet we shall not lose our labour, for God is rich enough, who can render to us more than can be expected from the whole world. This then is the lesson conveyed here.

But the circumstances must be noticed: the Prophet says, that he was *commanded* to promise deliverance to Ebedmelech, while he was yet confined in prison. This, at the first view, seems strange; for the Prophet might have objected and said, "Thou biddest me to go forth; why, then, are not the gates of the prison opened for me? and then thou wouldst have me to be the herald of thy favour; but my present miserable condition will prevent any credit to be given to my words: for how can Ebedmelech believe thatI have been sent by thee? for I am here confined and surrounded by many deaths." But let us hence learn not to bring down God's word to our judgment, when anything is promised beyond our expectation, and all our conceptions. Though, indeed, God seemed, as it were, to mock his servant, when he ordered him, a prisoner, to go to Ebedmelech; and yet the Prophet received and embraced this command, and performed it, no doubt, though this is not expressly mentioned.

This is the reason why he says, that a *word came to him from Jehovah, while he was in the court of the prison.*

The word *Ethiopian* is now repeated, because God intended, in the person of an alien, indirectly to reprove the Jews; for no doubt they despised him, because he was not of the holy seed of Abraham. But God shews that he peculiarly regarded him, while he rejected the masked and hypocritical children of Abraham, who were only born of him according to the flesh, but had, by their impiety, renounced him, so that they were wholly unworthy of so high an honour.

And he says, *Go and say, Behold, I am bringing my words on this city for evil and not for good; and they shall be before thee in that day.* We conclude, from these words, that this was spoken to Ebedmelech before the city was taken by the Chaldeans, in order that he might remain quietly at home, and not flee away with the king, who, as we have seen, tried to escape. God then intended to strengthen the confidence of Ebedmelech, so that he might not fear and tremble like others, and expose himself to death, in trying to secure his safety. For this is the design of all God's promises, even to keep us from being disturbed, to give us quietness of mind, and to cause us to look for the help promised to us. For we know that when fear lays hold on our minds, there is no settled purpose, but we are harassed by disquietude, and, as it were, tossed to and fro. It was therefore God's design to bring aid beforehand, so that Ebedmelech might not, with others, be hurried into despair. He says, *Behold, I am bringing*, &c. God here confirms Ebedmelech in the truth, that he would be the author of the calamity; for had Jerusalem been taken by chance, Ebedmelech might justly have feared; but when he was taught that it was to happen through God's just judgment, he would feel sure of his safety; for it would be in the power of the same God to save one man and even many, while he was destroying the whole people. This, then, is the reason why God declared that he was *bringing* his words for evil and not for good; for except Ebedmelech had been convinced that the city and its inhabitants were in God's hand and power,

wished to remind Ebedmelech of this, when he said that he *feared. Thou fearest,* he says. For if Ebedmelech had no fear, he might have disregarded this prophecy as being superfluous. But being reminded of his fear and anxiety, he became more ready to receive what God promised to him.

Then he says, that he would be safe, because the Lord would *deliver him in that day.* And, again, he confirms the same thing, *For delivering I will deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword.* The Prophet again calls the attention of Ebedmelech to God himself; for we know how all things are in a confusion when cities are taken by storm. Except then Ebedmelech had his mind fixed on God, he could never have retained any hope of deliverance. Hence the Prophet assures him again, that God would be his deliverer. And he adds, *Thy soul shall be for a prey.* This mode of expression has been elsewhere explained. The comparison is taken from those who deem that a great gain which is yet but small, if they get it beyond their expectation, as when a man finds a prey which he had by no means hoped for: he becomes suddenly rich, or increased in his goods; and though the gain may not be great, he yet greatly rejoices. So they who escape alive from present death, have no small reason to be joyful, because their life has been preserved. In the meantime God alludes to those who regard it enough to escape from death, though they may be deprived of all other things. As those who, in shipwreck, cast forth their merchandize, and their money, and all they have, deem it enough if they can reach the harbour, and they prefer to beg their bread all their life rather than to sink in the midst of the sea, so he who escapes with his life; though poverty is bitter, yet the horror of death is so great, that he deems his life a great gain, though stripped of all that he had.

The reason follows, *because* he *trusted* in God. Another reason might have been assigned, even because he had not been wanting in his kindness to a holy man, but had extended his hand to him in his extreme misery; but as that office of humanity proceeded from faith and piety, God does here express the chief cause. As then the mercy which

Ebedmelech exercised towards the Prophet was an evidence of his piety and faith, here is found the fruit in its own tree, or in its root: and certain it is, that Ebedmelech would have never been so humane towards the Prophet, had he not relied on God and his aid; for unbelief is always timid. There is then no doubt but that the vigour which appeared in Ebedmelech, when he regarded his life in bringing aid to the Prophet, made manifest that faith which is now commended: *because* then *thou hast trusted in me*, therefore *delivering I will deliver thee*, says God. There is now then no doubt but that Ebedmelech had some of the elements of faith and piety. If then God has allowed us to make farther progress, we may feel the more assured that he will be our deliverer; for his grace and his power will ever exceed our faith, how much soever it may be. Now follows—

CHAPTER XL

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him, being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

2. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.

3. Now the Lord hath brought *it*, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.

4. And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which *were* upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come, and I will look well unto thee; but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land *is* before thee: whither it seemeth good

1. Sermo qui fuit ad Jeremiam a Jehova, postquam dimisit eum Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, e Ramah, quum sustulisset ipsum: et ipse vinctus erat cathenis (*vel*, manicis,) in medio captivitatis (*hoc est*, multitudinis captivæ) Jerusalem et Jehudah, qui transferebantur Babylonem.

2. Et sumpsit princeps interfectorum Jeremiam, et dixit ad eum, Jehova Deus tuus loquutus est malum hoc super locum hunc;

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13. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rab-saris, and Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, and all the king of Babylon's princes;

13. Et misit Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, et Nebusazban, Rabsaris (*diximus quosdam has voces interpretari, quod sit princeps eunuchus, sed aliis magis placere esse proprium nomen, quos ego sequor*) et Neregal, Sarezer, Rabmag, et alii principes Regis Babel (Babylonis:)

14. Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

14. Miserunt (inquam) et tulerunt Jeremiam ex atrio custodiæ, et dederunt eum (*hoc est*, commiserunt eum) Godoliæ filio Achikam, filii Saphan, ut deduceret eum domum; et ita habitavit in medio populi.

HERE Jeremiah completes what we began yesterday to expound, even that by the command of King Nebuchadnezzar he was delivered from prison. But we have said, that though that heathen king had regard to his own interest, yet his mind was ruled by the secret power of God, who thus designed to rescue his servant from death; for God is wont thus to work even by the ungodly, who have another thing in view. It is not always by a voluntary act that men serve God, for many execute what God has decreed when they have no intention of doing so: and he so turns and drives them here and there, that they are constrained, willing or unwilling, to obey his authority. Thus, then, it was that Nebuchadnezzar liberated Jeremiah.

And yet the Prophet fully believed that he did not owe his life to King Nebuchadnezzar, but that he had been in a wonderful manner preserved by God's favour; and to shew this is the design of the whole narrative.

He says, that the king had sent all the leaders of the Chaldean army to take him out of the court of the prison, and that he was then delivered to the care of Gedaliah, not that he might be watched as usual, but because the princes knew that the people had entertained hatred towards the holy Prophet, and therefore wished him to be preserved safe from all violence. This then was the reason why they committed him to the keeping of Gedaliah, who, as we shall

hereafter see, was in favour with the Chaldeans and highly esteemed.

He adds in the last place, that he *dwelt in the midst of the people:* by which expression is set forth complete liberty, as we say in our language, *aller et venir.* He then says that he was in the midst of the people, because he had been before shut up in prison. It now follows—

15. Now the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

16. Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be *accomplished* in that day before thee.

17. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord; and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou *art* afraid.

18. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee; because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.

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17. Et eripiam te in die illo, dicit Jehova, et non traderis in manum hominum, a quorum facie tu expavescis (*ad verbum est*, quos tu expavescis ab eorum facie;)

18. Quia liberando liberabo te, in gladium non cades, et erit tibi anima tua in spolium, quia sperasti in me, dicit Jehova.

The Prophet tells us here that God was not unmindful of that Ethiopian, by whom he had been preserved, though he was an alien and from a barbarous nation. We have seen, however, that he alone undertook the cause of the Prophet, when others, being terrified by fear, did not exert themselves, or were avowedly enemies to God's servant. Ebedmelech then alone dared to go forth in a case so hopeless, and undertook the defence of the holy man. The Prophet says now that this service was so acceptable, that it would not be without its reward. We have said that Ebedmelech had thus manifested his concern for the Prophet's life, but not without evident danger; for he knew that the princes were united against him, and that these ungodly men had drawn to their side the greatest part of the court and also of the common people. Then Ebedmelech roused against himself both high and low; but God aided him, so that he was not

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overpowered by his adversaries. In his very danger he experienced the favour of God, and was protected and delivered from danger.

But now he finds that he had not ill employed his exertions; for he had not only been humane and merciful towards a mortal man, but had also done service for God; for whatever we do for God's servants, he acknowledges as done to himself, and will have it to be laid to his account, according to what Christ says, "He who gives a cup of cold water to one of the least of my disciples, shall not lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) There is then no doubt but that the Spirit of God intended by the example of Ebedmelech to rouse us to the duties of humanity, even to teach us to succour the miserable, and to give them help as far as we can, and not to shun the hatred of men or any dangers, which we may thereby incur. And as we are torpid and negligent in doing good, the reward given to the Ethiopian is set before us, so that we may know, that though nothing is to be hoped from men, when we are kind and liberal, yet we shall not lose our labour, for God is rich enough, who can render to us more than can be expected from the whole world. This then is the lesson conveyed here.

But the circumstances must be noticed: the Prophet says, that he was *commanded* to promise deliverance to Ebedmelech, while he was yet confined in prison. This, at the first view, seems strange; for the Prophet might have objected and said, "Thou biddest me to go forth; why, then, are not the gates of the prison opened for me? and then thou wouldst have me to be the herald of thy favour; but my present miserable condition will prevent any credit to be given to my words: for how can Ebedmelech believe thatI have been sent by thee? for I am here confined and surrounded by many deaths." But let us hence learn not to bring down God's word to our judgment, when anything is promised beyond our expectation, and all our conceptions. Though, indeed, God seemed, as it were, to mock his servant, when he ordered him, a prisoner, to go to Ebedmelech; and yet the Prophet received and embraced this command, and performed it, no doubt, though this is not expressly mentioned.

This is the reason why he says, that a *word came to him from Jehovah, while he was in the court of the prison.*

The word *Ethiopian* is now repeated, because God intended, in the person of an alien, indirectly to reprove the Jews; for no doubt they despised him, because he was not of the holy seed of Abraham. But God shews that he peculiarly regarded him, while he rejected the masked and hypocritical children of Abraham, who were only born of him according to the flesh, but had, by their impiety, renounced him, so that they were wholly unworthy of so high an honour.

And he says, *Go and say, Behold, I am bringing my words on this city for evil and not for good; and they shall be before thee in that day.* We conclude, from these words, that this was spoken to Ebedmelech before the city was taken by the Chaldeans, in order that he might remain quietly at home, and not flee away with the king, who, as we have seen, tried to escape. God then intended to strengthen the confidence of Ebedmelech, so that he might not fear and tremble like others, and expose himself to death, in trying to secure his safety. For this is the design of all God's promises, even to keep us from being disturbed, to give us quietness of mind, and to cause us to look for the help promised to us. For we know that when fear lays hold on our minds, there is no settled purpose, but we are harassed by disquietude, and, as it were, tossed to and fro. It was therefore God's design to bring aid beforehand, so that Ebedmelech might not, with others, be hurried into despair. He says, *Behold, I am bringing*, &c. God here confirms Ebedmelech in the truth, that he would be the author of the calamity; for had Jerusalem been taken by chance, Ebedmelech might justly have feared; but when he was taught that it was to happen through God's just judgment, he would feel sure of his safety; for it would be in the power of the same God to save one man and even many, while he was destroying the whole people. This, then, is the reason why God declared that he was *bringing* his words for evil and not for good; for except Ebedmelech had been convinced that the city and its inhabitants were in God's hand and power,

wished to remind Ebedmelech of this, when he said that he *feared*. *Thou fearest*, he says. For if Ebedmelech had no fear, he might have disregarded this prophecy as being superfluous. But being reminded of his fear and anxiety, he became more ready to receive what God promised to him.

Then he says, that he would be safe, because the Lord would *deliver him in that day*. And, again, he confirms the same thing, *For delivering I will deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword*. The Prophet again calls the attention of Ebedmelech to God himself; for we know how all things are in a confusion when cities are taken by storm. Except then Ebedmelech had his mind fixed on God, he could never have retained any hope of deliverance. Hence the Prophet assures him again, that God would be his deliverer. And he adds, *Thy soul shall be for a prey*. This mode of expression has been elsewhere explained. The comparison is taken from those who deem that a great gain which is yet but small, if they get it beyond their expectation, as when a man finds a prey which he had by no means hoped for: he becomes suddenly rich, or increased in his goods; and though the gain may not be great, he yet greatly rejoices. So they who escape alive from present death, have no small reason to be joyful, because their life has been preserved. In the meantime God alludes to those who regard it enough to escape from death, though they may be deprived of all other things. As those who, in shipwreck, cast forth their merchandize, and their money, and all they have, deem it enough if they can reach the harbour, and they prefer to beg their bread all their life rather than to sink in the midst of the sea, so he who escapes with his life; though poverty is bitter, yet the horror of death is so great, that he deems his life a great gain, though stripped of all that he had.

The reason follows, *because* he *trusted* in God. Another reason might have been assigned, even because he had not been wanting in his kindness to a holy man, but had extended his hand to him in his extreme misery; but as that office of humanity proceeded from faith and piety, God does here express the chief cause. As then the mercy which

Ebedmelech exercised towards the Prophet was an evidence of his piety and faith, here is found the fruit in its own tree, or in its root: and certain it is, that Ebedmelech would have never been so humane towards the Prophet, had he not relied on God and his aid; for unbelief is always timid. There is then no doubt but that the vigour which appeared in Ebedmelech, when he regarded his life in bringing aid to the Prophet, made manifest that faith which is now commended: *because* then *thou hast trusted in me,* therefore *delivering I will deliver thee,* says God. There is now then no doubt but that Ebedmelech had some of the elements of faith and piety. If then God has allowed us to make farther progress, we may feel the more assured that he will be our deliverer; for his grace and his power will ever exceed our faith, how much soever it may be. Now follows—

CHAPTER XL.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him, being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

2. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.

3. Now the Lord hath brought *it,* and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.

4. And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which *were* upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come, and I will look well unto thee; but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land *is* before thee: whither it seemeth good

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he was taken out of the court of the prison, and that he was brought there in the presence of all the people; for it is probable also that all the Jews, who were to be led into exile, were brought there too, and that they were there mustered, that none might escape, for they would have slipped off here and there, had they not been delivered to guards. When, therefore, all the captives were there, Nebuzaradan ordered Jeremiah to be brought forth, not for the sake of degrading him, for, as we have seen, the king had been solicitous about his life; and no doubt this courtier wished to gratify his king in every way: but it was, on the contrary, for the purpose of an indirect reproof to all the people, as though he would honour the servant of God, who had so faithfully warned them, and for so long a time, even above forty years, and would set before them their wickedness, and also their ingratitude, for having so cruelly treated God's servant.

This then was the reason why Nebuzaradan wished Jeremiah to come bound with chains, and to be released in the presence of all the people; it was that the Jews might at length be ashamed of their pride and impiety against God, and of their ingratitude towards the holy Prophet. Nebuzaradan then did not treat Jeremiah reproachfully; but he brought him forth in chains, that he might publicly expose the wickedness of the whole nation.

He says, that an *option* was given him by Nebuzaradan; so that if he wished, he might remain in his own country, and choose the best place for himself, and the situation which was most agreeable to him; but if he chose rather to go to Babylon, there he might go. This, certainly, was a liberal offer. The Prophet was not only freed from prison and loosed from his chains; but liberty was so given him, that he alone was free, while the whole nation was reduced to bondage. For they who remained had no liberty to go elsewhere. But Nebuzaradan gave here a free option to Jeremiah, so that he was at liberty either to live in Chaldea, or to remain in any place he wished, or in any part of the earth.

But before he says this, he administers reproof to the people, and says, *Jehovah thy God hath spoken evil on this city;*

and he hath brought it, and made it to come. Here Nebuzaradan undertook the prophetic office, and spoke in high terms of God's righteous vengeance on the people. There is no doubt but that God had raised up such a teacher to the Jews; for they had for forty years and more obstinately rejected celestial truth. God had not ceased kindly to invite them to repentance, and to promise them pardon and salvation, provided they repented. As then God had not ceased for so long a time, and continually to address them according to his paternal goodness, and at the same time had spoken to the deaf, they deserved to hear such a preacher as Nebuzaradan, who now contumeliously upbraided them, that they had brought this evil on themselves, because they had been disobedient and rebellious against God, as they had not obeyed his word.

There is here a remarkable example set before us, so that we may learn, that when God addresses us by his servants, we ought immediately to render obedience to him; let us learn to fear when he threatens us, and learn to entertain hope when he offers his favour to us. For if we reject the Prophets when they are sent to us, other teachers will arise, who will deride us, and though they may be themselves ungodly, they will yet upbraid us with our impiety. This then is the doctrine we ought to gather from this passage, in which we see that Nebuzaradan, as though gifted with the prophetic spirit, severely rebuked the people. He, indeed, addressed Jeremiah, and seems to have included him with the people, when he said, *Thy God hath spoken—because ye have sinned and have been rebellious.* But Nebuzaradan, no doubt, thus highly commended the faithfulness of Jeremiah, because he had been true and faithful in his vocation and office. He then did not make him as one of the people, nor did he mean that he had sinned with others, or had been rebellious against God. But, in the first place, he addressed Jeremiah, *Thy God,* he said; and this was expressed by way of honour, even that God was the God of Jeremiah; for though the people boasted that they were holy, yet Nebuzaradan here indirectly condemned their foolish boastings, since he intimated that Jeremiah alone was worthy of being deemed one

they were not so large a number, but that each of them had some extent of land, as we shall hereafter see. While then these miserable men, who before lived very scantily, and perhaps begged their bread, while these remained secure in the land of Judah, the possessors of the land were torn away and driven into exile; and as Nebuzaradan had assigned to each of them vineyards and fields, it hence appears how much better it was for them to have suffered hunger for a time, to have been in an ignoble condition, and to have been trodden as it were under foot by others, than to have lived in pomp and splendour. Thus often God shews his care for us, when he suffers us not to rise high, but keeps us in an obscure and humble condition; and the issue at length proves that he thus had a regard for our salvation.

At the same time there is here set before our eyes a woful change. The king is led bound in chains, and is also blind; and all the rest having left their own, are driven into exile; and, on the other hand, the poor alone, and needy men who had nothing, dwell at large, as it were, in their own possessions. As, then, they had their quiet habitations and large fields, and enjoyed a land so fertile and rich, there is no doubt but that Nebuzaradan meant thus to rouse the envy of the exiles; for they saw that needy and worthless men dwelt in that land from which they had been banished. Hence their indignation was increased when they saw that they were more severely and cruelly treated than those lowest of men. It follows,—

11. Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, saying,

12. Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.

11. Præcepit autem Nabuchadnezer rex Babylonis de Jeremia per manum Nabuzardan principis interfectorum, dicendo,

12. Tolle ipsum et oculos tuos pone super eum, et ne facias ei quicquam mali; sed prout loquutus fuerit tecum fac cum eo.

The Prophet now sets forth the paternal care of God, which he had experienced in the preservation of his life and safety. The innocent, we know, are often killed in a tumult, and the storming of cities is turbulent, so that many things are done without any thought; nay, even the leaders are

not able to moderate the excesses of the victorious. When, therefore, the Chaldeans burnt the palace, Jeremiah might have perished at the same time, being suffocated by the very smoke of the fire. We know what happened at the taking of Syracuse. Marcellus did not wish that Archimedes should perish, nay, he commanded that he should be preserved; for he wished to save that man on account of his singular industry and noble genius. However, while he was drawing circles on the ground, he was killed by a common soldier. If no one had come to Jeremiah, he might, as I have said, have been buried under the ruins of the palace, when the king's court was burnt down. But he says that he had been wonderfully preserved, for *Nebuchadnezzar had given a command respecting him*, that he might not be exposed to any trouble, but that Nebuzaradan as well as the whole army should secure his safety.

It is indeed probable that the king of Babylon had heard of Jeremiah; and though he was in prison, yet the Word of God, which he boldly proclaimed, was not bound. Then the report of this might have reached the king of Babylon: and hence it was, that he was disposed to preserve him; for he had given a faithful counsel to Zedekiah. But Nebuchadnezzar no doubt regarded only his own advantage; and hence we ought to bear in mind the wonderful goodness of God in preserving, as it were, by his own hand, the life of the Prophet; so that in extremities no one touched him, but he remained free and quiet, as we shall hereafter see. But we must put off the rest until to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, omnipotent God, that since thou hast once given us so awful a proof of thy wrath in the destruction of that city, which thou didst choose, and in which thou hadst had thy holy habitation,—O grant, that we may learn so to submit to thee in true humility and obedience, that we may not provoke thy extreme displeasure, but on the contrary anticipate it by real repentance, and that being terrified by thy threatenings, we may so submit ourselves to thee as to obtain thy mercy, and thus to regard thee as a Father, ever propitious to all those who flee to thee through Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Second.

13. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard sent, and Nebushasban, Rab-saris, and Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, and all the king of Babylon's princes;

13. Et misit Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, et Nebusazban, Rabsaris (*diximus quosdam has voces interpretari, quod sit princeps eunuchus, sed aliis magis placere esse proprium nomen, quos ego sequor*) et Neregal, Sarezer, Rabmag, et alii principes Regis Babel (Babylonis:)

14. Even they sent, and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison, and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home: so he dwelt among the people.

14. Miserunt (inquam) et tulerunt Jeremiam ex atrio custodiæ, et dederunt eum (*hoc est*, commiserunt eum) Godoliæ filio Achikam, filii Saphan, ut deduceret eum domum; et ita habitavit in medio populi.

HERE Jeremiah completes what we began yesterday to expound, even that by the command of King Nebuchadnezzar he was delivered from prison. But we have said, that though that heathen king had regard to his own interest, yet his mind was ruled by the secret power of God, who thus designed to rescue his servant from death; for God is wont thus to work even by the ungodly, who have another thing in view. It is not always by a voluntary act that men serve God, for many execute what God has decreed when they have no intention of doing so: and he so turns and drives them here and there, that they are constrained, willing or unwilling, to obey his authority. Thus, then, it was that Nebuchadnezzar liberated Jeremiah.

And yet the Prophet fully believed that he did not owe his life to King Nebuchadnezzar, but that he had been in a wonderful manner preserved by God's favour; and to shew this is the design of the whole narrative.

He says, that the king had sent all the leaders of the Chaldean army to take him out of the court of the prison, and that he was then delivered to the care of Gedaliah, not that he might be watched as usual, but because the princes knew that the people had entertained hatred towards the holy Prophet, and therefore wished him to be preserved safe from all violence. This then was the reason why they committed him to the keeping of Gedaliah, who, as we shall

hereafter see, was in favour with the Chaldeans and highly esteemed.

He adds in the last place, that he *dwelt in the midst of the people:* by which expression is set forth complete liberty, as we say in our language, *aller et venir.* He then says that he was in the midst of the people, because he had been before shut up in prison. It now follows—

15. Now the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

16. Go and speak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be *accomplished* in that day before thee.

17. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord; and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou *art* afraid.

18. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee; because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord.

15. Ad Jeremiam vero fuit sermo Jehovæ, quum adhuc esset clausus in atrio custodiæ, dicendo,

16. Vade et dic Ebedmelech Æthiopi (*hoc est*, alloquere Ebedmelech, dicendo,) Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Ecce adduco sermones meos super urbem hanc in malum, et non in bonum; et erunt coram facie tua in die illo:

17. Et eripiam te in die illo, dicit Jehova, et non traderis in manum hominum, a quorum facie tu expavescis (*ad verbum est*, quos tu expavescis ab eorum facie;)

18. Quia liberando liberabo te, in gladium non cades, et erit tibi anima tua in spolium, quia sperasti in me, dicit Jehova.

The Prophet tells us here that God was not unmindful of that Ethiopian, by whom he had been preserved, though he was an alien and from a barbarous nation. We have seen, however, that he alone undertook the cause of the Prophet, when others, being terrified by fear, did not exert themselves, or were avowedly enemies to God's servant. Ebedmelech then alone dared to go forth in a case so hopeless, and undertook the defence of the holy man. The Prophet says now that this service was so acceptable, that it would not be without its reward. We have said that Ebedmelech had thus manifested his concern for the Prophet's life, but not without evident danger; for he knew that the princes were united against him, and that these ungodly men had drawn to their side the greatest part of the court and also of the common people. Then Ebedmelech roused against himself both high and low; but God aided him, so that he was not

overpowered by his adversaries. In his very danger he experienced the favour of God, and was protected and delivered from danger.

But now he finds that he had not ill employed his exertions; for he had not only been humane and merciful towards a mortal man, but had also done service for God; for whatever we do for God's servants, he acknowledges as done to himself, and will have it to be laid to his account, according to what Christ says, "He who gives a cup of cold water to one of the least of my disciples, shall not lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) There is then no doubt but that the Spirit of God intended by the example of Ebedmelech to rouse us to the duties of humanity, even to teach us to succour the miserable, and to give them help as far as we can, and not to shun the hatred of men or any dangers, which we may thereby incur. And as we are torpid and negligent in doing good, the reward given to the Ethiopian is set before us, so that we may know, that though nothing is to be hoped from men, when we are kind and liberal, yet we shall not lose our labour, for God is rich enough, who can render to us more than can be expected from the whole world. This then is the lesson conveyed here.

But the circumstances must be noticed: the Prophet says, that he was *commanded* to promise deliverance to Ebedmelech, while he was yet confined in prison. This, at the first view, seems strange; for the Prophet might have objected and said, "Thou biddest me to go forth; why, then, are not the gates of the prison opened for me? and then thou wouldst have me to be the herald of thy favour; but my present miserable condition will prevent any credit to be given to my words: for how can Ebedmelech believe thatI have been sent by thee? for I am here confined and surrounded by many deaths." But let us hence learn not to bring down God's word to our judgment, when anything is promised beyond our expectation, and all our conceptions. Though, indeed, God seemed, as it were, to mock his servant, when he ordered him, a prisoner, to go to Ebedmelech; and yet the Prophet received and embraced this command, and performed it, no doubt, though this is not expressly mentioned.

This is the reason why he says, that a *word came to him from Jehovah, while he was in the court of the prison.*

The word *Ethiopian* is now repeated, because God intended, in the person of an alien, indirectly to reprove the Jews; for no doubt they despised him, because he was not of the holy seed of Abraham. But God shews that he peculiarly regarded him, while he rejected the masked and hypocritical children of Abraham, who were only born of him according to the flesh, but had, by their impiety, renounced him, so that they were wholly unworthy of so high an honour.

And he says, *Go and say, Behold, I am bringing my words on this city for evil and not for good; and they shall be before thee in that day.* We conclude, from these words, that this was spoken to Ebedmelech before the city was taken by the Chaldeans, in order that he might remain quietly at home, and not flee away with the king, who, as we have seen, tried to escape. God then intended to strengthen the confidence of Ebedmelech, so that he might not fear and tremble like others, and expose himself to death, in trying to secure his safety. For this is the design of all God's promises, even to keep us from being disturbed, to give us quietness of mind, and to cause us to look for the help promised to us. For we know that when fear lays hold on our minds, there is no settled purpose, but we are harassed by disquietude, and, as it were, tossed to and fro. It was therefore God's design to bring aid beforehand, so that Ebedmelech might not, with others, be hurried into despair. He says, *Behold, I am bringing*, &c. God here confirms Ebedmelech in the truth, that he would be the author of the calamity; for had Jerusalem been taken by chance, Ebedmelech might justly have feared; but when he was taught that it was to happen through God's just judgment, he would feel sure of his safety; for it would be in the power of the same God to save one man and even many, while he was destroying the whole people. This, then, is the reason why God declared that he was *bringing* his words for evil and not for good; for except Ebedmelech had been convinced that the city and its inhabitants were in God's hand and power,

Ebedmelech exercised towards the Prophet was an evidence of his piety and faith, here is found the fruit in its own tree, or in its root: and certain it is, that Ebedmelech would have never been so humane towards the Prophet, had he not relied on God and his aid; for unbelief is always timid. There is then no doubt but that the vigour which appeared in Ebedmelech, when he regarded his life in bringing aid to the Prophet, made manifest that faith which is now commended: *because* then *thou hast trusted in me*, therefore *delivering I will deliver thee*, says God. There is now then no doubt but that Ebedmelech had some of the elements of faith and piety. If then God has allowed us to make farther progress, we may feel the more assured that he will be our deliverer; for his grace and his power will ever exceed our faith, how much soever it may be. Now follows—

CHAPTER XL

1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him, being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

2. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.

3. Now the Lord hath brought *it*, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.

4. And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which *were* upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come, and I will look well unto thee; but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land *is* before thee: whither it seemeth good

1. Sermo qui fuit ad Jeremiam a Jehova, postquam dimisit eum Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, e Ramah, quum sustulisset ipsum: et ipse vinctus erat cathenis (*vel*, manicis,) in medio captivitatis (*hoc est*, multitudinis captivæ) Jerusalem et Jehudah, qui transferebantur Babylonem.

2. Et sumpsit princeps interfectorum Jeremiam, et dixit ad eum, Jehova Deus tuus loquutus est malum hoc super locum hunc;

3. Et adduxit et fecit Jehova sicut loquutus fuerat, quia peccastis Jehovæ, et non audiistis vocem ejus; et fuit vobis res hæc (*hoc est*, accidit vobis hæc res.)

4. Et tu ecce (*hoc est*, quantum ad te,) ego ecce solvi te hodie a manicis (*vel*, cathenis, *sed potius*, a manicis, *quoniam addit*) quæ erant super manus tuas (*ideo perperam alii, vertunt*, compedes, *quia non ligantur compedibus;*) si bonum in oculis tuis fecerit, ut venias (*hoc est*, si tibi placuerit venire) Babylonem, venias;

and convenient for thee to go, thither go.

ego autem ponam oculum meum super te; si autem malum in oculis tuis fuerit, ut venias Babylonem, desine (cessa, *vel*, supersedeas:) ecce tota regio coram facie tua est, ad bonum et rectum in oculis tuis, ad proficiscendum (*hoc est*, quod fuerit bonum et rectum in oculis tuis,) ut illic eas, eas.

Here Jeremiah pursues more at large what he had briefly touched upon before; for the Hebrews were wont, in a few words, to state the substance of the whole, and then to explain more diffusely what they had briefly said. Jeremiah had before told us that some of the Babylonian generals had been sent to release him from prison; and he added that he had been committed to the care of Gedaliah, who had been set over the poor of the land. He now tells us, that he, as yet bound with chains, had been brought forth to Ramah in that miserable condition. These things appear inconsistent, but, as I have said, we must bear in mind, that there is an omission in that summary, which we have noticed. For, in the first instance, Jeremiah only said, that he had been freed from his chains; but he now states the manner more distinctly, and, as it were, the different parts of the transaction. Then this order ought to be especially noticed.

Moreover, this chapter so begins, that he seems throughout the chapter to have forgotten the introduction. He says, that a *word came* to him; he afterwards declares historically, how he had been brought to Ramah, and then that he had been released there, and also that Gedaliah was set over the remainder of the people: in short, there is not in this long passage any mention made of any prophecy; but there is inserted a whole historical narrative before the Prophet expresses what God had committed to him, after the city was taken, and after he had been restored to his former liberty. When, therefore, he says here, that a *word came* to him, we must wait until he has completed what we find in this chapter; for he will then return to this prophecy.

Let us now consider the words. *After Nebuzaradan*, he says, *dismissed him from Ramah*, &c.; into which place he had been brought by the guards, when he was as yet bound with chains. There is then no doubt but that the leaders of the army had ordered Jeremiah to be brought there, after

he was taken out of the court of the prison, and that he was brought there in the presence of all the people; for it is probable also that all the Jews, who were to be led into exile, were brought there too, and that they were there mustered, that none might escape, for they would have slipped off here and there, had they not been delivered to guards. When, therefore, all the captives were there, Nebuzaradan ordered Jeremiah to be brought forth, not for the sake of degrading him, for, as we have seen, the king had been solicitous about his life; and no doubt this courtier wished to gratify his king in every way: but it was, on the contrary, for the purpose of an indirect reproof to all the people, as though he would honour the servant of God, who had so faithfully warned them, and for so long a time, even above forty years, and would set before them their wickedness, and also their ingratitude, for having so cruelly treated God's servant.

This then was the reason why Nebuzaradan wished Jeremiah to come bound with chains, and to be released in the presence of all the people; it was that the Jews might at length be ashamed of their pride and impiety against God, and of their ingratitude towards the holy Prophet. Nebuzaradan then did not treat Jeremiah reproachfully; but he brought him forth in chains, that he might publicly expose the wickedness of the whole nation.

He says, that an *option* was given him by Nebuzaradan; so that if he wished, he might remain in his own country, and choose the best place for himself, and the situation which was most agreeable to him; but if he chose rather to go to Babylon, there he might go. This, certainly, was a liberal offer. The Prophet was not only freed from prison and loosed from his chains; but liberty was so given him, that he alone was free, while the whole nation was reduced to bondage. For they who remained had no liberty to go elsewhere. But Nebuzaradan gave here a free option to Jeremiah, so that he was at liberty either to live in Chaldea, or to remain in any place he wished, or in any part of the earth.

But before he says this, he administers reproof to the people, and says, *Jehovah thy God hath spoken evil on this city;*

and he hath brought it, and made it to come. Here Nebuzaradan undertook the prophetic office, and spoke in high terms of God's righteous vengeance on the people. There is no doubt but that God had raised up such a teacher to the Jews; for they had for forty years and more obstinately rejected celestial truth. God had not ceased kindly to invite them to repentance, and to promise them pardon and salvation, provided they repented. As then God had not ceased for so long a time, and continually to address them according to his paternal goodness, and at the same time had spoken to the deaf, they deserved to hear such a preacher as Nebuzaradan, who now contumeliously upbraided them, that they had brought this evil on themselves, because they had been disobedient and rebellious against God, as they had not obeyed his word.

There is here a remarkable example set before us, so that we may learn, that when God addresses us by his servants, we ought immediately to render obedience to him; let us learn to fear when he threatens us, and learn to entertain hope when he offers his favour to us. For if we reject the Prophets when they are sent to us, other teachers will arise, who will deride us, and though they may be themselves ungodly, they will yet upbraid us with our impiety. This then is the doctrine we ought to gather from this passage, in which we see that Nebuzaradan, as though gifted with the prophetic spirit, severely rebuked the people. He, indeed, addressed Jeremiah, and seems to have included him with the people, when he said, *Thy God hath spoken—because ye have sinned and have been rebellious.* But Nebuzaradan, no doubt, thus highly commended the faithfulness of Jeremiah, because he had been true and faithful in his vocation and office. He then did not make him as one of the people, nor did he mean that he had sinned with others, or had been rebellious against God. But, in the first place, he addressed Jeremiah, *Thy God,* he said; and this was expressed by way of honour, even that God was the God of Jeremiah; for though the people boasted that they were holy, yet Nebuzaradan here indirectly condemned their foolish boastings, since he intimated that Jeremiah alone was worthy of being deemed one

of God's servants, as though he had said, that the Jews were unworthy of the honour of glorying in God's name, or of professing it: *Thy God* then *hath spoken.* The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast promised that we shall be to thee as the apple of the eye,—O grant, that we may ever flee under the shadow of thy mercy, and that this alone may be our tranquillity in times of confusion and misery: and may we, at the same time, recumb in confidence on thy help, that we may, in sincerity, perform what thou commandest us, and that which is our duty to do, so that we may, by experience, find, that all they who obey thy voice are really sustained by thine hand, and that those are never disappointed who look for the certain reward of their obedience from thee; and may we carry on the warfare so perseveringly in this life, that we may know that there is a reward laid up for us in heaven, when Christ thine only-begotten Son shall appear.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Third.

We began yesterday to explain the words of Nebuzaradan which he spoke before all the Jews. We have said that though he directed his words to Jeremiah, yet what he said referred to the whole people; for he spoke in praise of Jeremiah, and subscribed to his prophecies: he hence concluded that the people deserved their extreme punishment. He says that God *had spoken,* not that he had faith in the words of Jeremiah, but as far as he saw, that they were serviceable to his purpose. He gladly laid hold on what he approved, as ungodly men do, who embrace what is useful for them in God's Law and the Prophets, though they do not regard them with much reverence; and yet they pretend a great concern for religion. Such was the case with Nebuzaradan; when he had got the victory over the Jews, he boasted that he was the minister of God; *Jehovah,* he says, *has spoken,* as though he had said, that the Jews suffered such punishment as they deserved, because God had long before declared that he would punish them.

And then he adds, that God had *done* as he had *spoken*, because they had *sinned* and *hearkened not* to his *voice*. He was nothing better; but as I have already said, he boldly reproved others. And this is a common thing with hypocrites and all despisers of God; they are judges in another's cause, but look not, as one has said, on the other side of the wallet. Thus all are keen and ready enough to condemn others; and of this we have an example here in Nebuzaradan, for, as though he was the lawful judge of the people, he declared that the destruction of the city and Temple had not happened by chance, but that it was a just punishment inflicted by God on the wicked, because they had obstinately rejected the prophetic doctrine, and had been intractable and disobedient.

¶ Nor is there indeed a doubt, as we hinted yesterday, but that God, in order to expose the Jews to greater shame, raised up for them this prophet; for when Jeremiah addressed them, and that for their safety, while yet there was time to repent, they had perversely rejected that favour of God. They then deserved to be addressed with no benefit by a foreign teacher, who exulted over them, as this unbelieving heathen did in the present instance.

As to the option given to Jeremiah, we said yesterday that it was openly made in the presence of the Jews, in order that Nebuzaradan might wound them the more. But at the same time it was God's purpose to make the perseverance of his servant an example, as we shall hereafter see. Let us now proceed,—

5. Now, while he was not yet gone back, *he said*, Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people; or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go.

5. Adhuc autem non reversus erat (*hoc per parenthesin legendum est*) et revertere ad Godoliam filium Achikam filii Saphan, quem præfecit rex Babylonis urbibus Jehudah, et habita cum eo in medio populi, vel ad quemcunque locum qui visus erit in oculis tuis ad proficiscendum illuc proficiscere; et dedit illi princeps interfectorum cibum et munus (*est enallage numeri*, munera) et demisit eum.

Jeremiah goes on with the same discourse, that Nebuzaradan dealt bountifully with him, and permitted him to go

wherever he wished. We hence conclude that Nebuchadnezzar was fully convinced of the honesty and uprightness of Jeremiah. For he knew how he was regarded among his own people, and that he might rouse great disturbances, except he was upright and quiet. As, then, Nebuchadnezzar had no doubt respecting the character of Jeremiah, he wished to grant him free liberty to choose his own habitation in any city he pleased, or to remove wherever it seemed good to him. Invitation was given him to go to Babylon, and a promise of favour was added; but it was further permitted to him to remain in his own country.

I have said that this was done according to the divine purpose, that the Prophet might give a proof of his religion. For if he had gone to Chaldea, it might have been that the confidence of many would have failed them, and that faith in the promises would have vanished: for they might have thought it a sign of hopeless despair, had the Prophet gone there. That he might not then disturb weak minds, he thought it his duty to remain in his own country. And hence God inclined the mind of Nebuchadnezzar and the minds of his leaders to grant liberty to the holy Prophet to remain in Judea, as though for the purpose of raising a standard for the captives, and of accomplishing their return after seventy years. We shall, however, see presently that he was led away elsewhere; but that in no degree frustrated his prophecies, because violent men led him away as a captive, and he at length died in Egypt. But he did not willingly remove from Judea, though he found there nothing but grief and sorrow; for he did not gratify himself, nor could he indulge in any pleasures, in the abundance of meat and drink, but he was ever lamenting the overthrow of his own nation, and especially the destruction of the Temple. As, then, he preferred Judea to all other countries, and submitted to be a constant spectator of so many miseries, he gave a remarkable proof of his faith and patience, and thus strengthened the faith of the miserable exiles, so that they might know that God would be yet merciful and propitious to his people.

He goes on with the words of Nebuzaradan, but he intro-

duces this clause, *He was not yet gone back*, that is, because he was not yet gone back. Then Nebuzaradan said, "*Return to Gedaliah*, that is, if thou preferrest to live here rather than to follow me, then go to Gedaliah." Here Nebuzaradan shews how he would have Jeremiah to live in safety in that land, which was as yet like a den of robbers, even that he should be with Gedaliah. And we see how solicitous Nebuzaradan was to preserve the life of the Prophet, for he wished that Gedaliah should be his guardian, as he had briefly said before; but he now sets the matter more fully and more at large before him, *Return*, he says, *to Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon hath set over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him.* He intimates that Jeremiah would be without danger if he dwelt with Gedaliah, because he had been set over Judah by the king of Babylon. Repeated at the same time is what we have before observed, that it was in the Prophet's power, either to go to Gedaliah or to go anywhere else; *Whatever place*, he says, *it seems right in thine eyes to go to, go there.* He did not then assign to him any certain place, but gave him leave to go anywhere; so that the Prophet was to choose for himself an habitation either in Judea or out of Judea.

It follows, that he *gave him food;* for so I render the אֲרֻחָה, *areche*, though some, "a present;" but it means food, as we shall hereafter see in the fifty-first chapter, where Jeremiah speaks of daily bread. The second word, מִשְׁאֵת, *meshae*, I regard as meaning a gift or a present. Then Nebuzaradan bestowed on God's servant food and other gifts. As to food, the Prophet might have well accepted it, for after the city was taken we know that he must have been in want of everything. Even before, he lived very scantily and miserably, having only a piece of bread daily. And now, when Nebuzaradan supplied him with food, there was no reason why the holy man should not in such want receive what was given him. But as to the *presents*, Jeremiah may seem to have forgotten himself; for it was a disgrace to him to receive from an enemy of God's people, a present or gifts for his doctrine; for whence proceeded this benevolence and bounty to the Prophet, except that Nebuzaradan knew that

his prophecy referred to the destruction of his own nation? It seems, then, that for this reason he wished to reward the holy man; he ought then to have refused these presents. But it is probable that he was not enriched by a large sum of money, or by costly things; Nebuzaradan only gave him some token of benevolence; and the Prophet might without suspicion have received the present, not as a reward for his doctrine, but rather as a confirmation of it offered by God, because the Jews had been enemies to him as long as he had been faithfully spending his labours among them; for when he bitterly reproved them, he had no other object but to secure their safety. But as he had been so inhumanely treated by the Jews, God intended that more humanity should be shewn to him by a heathen and barbarous nation than by the children of Abraham, who boasted that they were the holy people of God. It was, then, for this reason that Jeremiah received gifts from the hand of Nebuzaradan. It follows,—

6. Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.

6. Et venit Jeremias ad Godoliam filium Achikam in Mispath; et habitavit cum eo in medio populi, qui residui erant in terra.

Here is shewn to us the firmness of the Prophet, that he hesitated not to reject what Nebuzaradan kindly offered to him, and yet he might have committed a great offence in making light, as it were, of Chaldea. It was, as we know, a very pleasant country, and very fertile; and tyrants cannot bear their bounty to be despised; for when they are pleased to honour any one, however little may be what they offer, if he refuses, they regard it as a dishonour done to them. The Prophet, then, might have been overcome by modesty and fear, so as to remove to Chaldea. That he dared simply to refuse the offer, and to ask that he might dwell in his own country, was a proof and evidence that he had more concern for religion, and more care for God's Church, than for all the favours of men, and all that he might have hoped from the wealth of Babylon and Chaldea.

We hence see that the Prophet in receiving presents, accepted of nothing but what he knew would be for the benefit

of God's Church. At the same time he made light of the offence he might have given, when he chose to remain in his own country ; for as we have said, it was as though he erected a standard to invite the Jews to return, and thus to prove the truth of his prophecy respecting their exile being temporary, the end of which was to be hoped for after seventy years. For this reason he says, that he went to Gedaliah, and dwelt in the midst of the people, even of those who remained in the land. It follows,—

7. Now, when all the captains of the forces which *were* in the fields, *even* they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon ;

8. Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

7. Et audierunt omnes principes exercituum qui erant in agro, ipsi et viri eorum, quod præfecisset rex Babylonis Godoliam filium Achikam in terra ; et quod commiserat ei viros et mulieres et parvulum (*hoc est*, parvulos, *sed fere in singulari numero hoc nomen legitur tam singulari quam plurali significatione,*) et ex paupertate terræ ex his qui non fuerant translati Babylonem ;

8. Et venerunt ad Godoliam in Mispath Ishmael filius Nathaniæ et Jochanan (Joannes) et Jonathan filii Chareah et Seraiah filius Thanekumeth et filii Ophi, qui erat Nethophites, et Jazanias filius Maachati, ipsi et viri eorum.

Mention has been before made of Gedaliah. We have seen that the Prophet was once rescued from death through his kindness, for he interposed for him when almost all with one consent doomed the holy Prophet to death.[1] And God bestowed on him no common honour, that while he was seeking nothing, Nebuchadnezzar should set him as governor over the land. He did not, indeed, enjoy power for any length of time ; but it was yet God's will to extend his hand to the pious man, so that he might have, at least for a time, some evidence of his favour. He was at length, as we shall see, killed by treachery.

The Prophet now tells us, that the leaders of the forces, before scattered together with their troops, were now come to him. When the Prophet says that they were *in the field*,

[1] There is here an oversight ; it was his father Ahikam that delivered the Prophet, as recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter.—*Ed.*

I do not think as some, that they were those who fled when the city was taken. But probably they were those who were forced to flee from the cities at the first entrance of the Chaldean army. Nor does it seem probable that they escaped, when all the companions of the king were overtaken and caught in the plain of Jericho, as we have already seen. I then think that they were those who had been scattered here and there, having deserted the cities committed to them at the first approach of their enemies. As then they had been wanderers from their own country and exiles, they now returned to Gedaliah. By saying that the *leaders of the forces had heard*, he does not mean that they had now an army, but that they had been set over cities and towns in Judea together with their troops. *They* then and *their men, came to Gedaliah*, when they *heard* that the king of Babylon had set Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, over Judea, and that men, women, and children were committed to his power or keeping. And then he adds, *from the poverty of the land*, that is, from the dregs of the people, even *from those who had not been removed to Babylon:* they *came*, even *Ishmael*, &c.; who, as we shall hereafter see, became a traitor. He was, as the Prophet says, of the royal family. His spirits were still very high, and influenced by envy, he killed Gedaliah, though he had been kindly received by him. He had, at the same time, received a reward for his treachery from the king of Amon. But all these things we shall see in what follows.

He names here the fugitive chiefs, the first of whom was Ishmael, and among them were the sons of Kareah; who had pledged their faith to Gedaliah; but he was too credulous, and, at the same time, closed his ears to wise counsels and warnings. The Prophet proceeds to tell us how Gedaliah dealt with his own nation,—

9. And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, sware unto them, and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.

9. Et juravit illis Godolias filius Achikam et viris eorum, dicendo, Ne metuatis a serviendo (*hoc est*, ne metuatis servire, *ne impediat vos* timor quo minus serviatis Chaldæis;) sed subjicite vos et servite regi Babylonis; et bene erit vobis.

10. As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans which will come unto us; but ye, gather ye wine, and summer-fruits, and oil, and put *them* in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken.

10. Et ego, ecce ego manebo in Mispath, ut stem coram facie Chaldæorum (*hoc est*, ut occurram Chaldæis) qui venient ad nos; et vos colligite vinum et fructus æstivos (קַיִץ significat *æstatem*, *sed transfertur metaphorice ad æstivos* fructus,) et oleum; et reponite in vasis vestris, et habitate in urbibus quas apprehenderitis.

Here, as I have hinted, is explained the great humanity of Gedaliah, and also his pious solicitude for his own nation, in order that the perfidy and cruelty of the son of Nethaniah might appear the more detestable, who slew a man so well deserving in his conduct to him and to others, having been led to do so by reward.

The Prophet says that he *sware* to them; nor was it strange to interpose an oath in a state of things so disturbed. Hardly could Ishmael and the rest have any confidence, since the Chaldeans had been so extremely hostile to them; they must, indeed, have been in the greatest trepidation. There was, therefore, need of a remedy, even that Gedaliah should assure them of his integrity. This was the reason why he made an oath; for had it been in times of tranquillity, an oath would not have been necessary. But as their life hung, as it were, on a thread, and they saw many dangers on every side, there was need of a confirmation; nor did Gedaliah receive them without some danger; for it was not pleasing to the Chaldeans that such men should continue in the land. For we have seen that the princes had been on this account killed, and then all the chief men among the people had been removed to Chaldea, lest any of them should attempt some new commotions. It was, therefore, the object of Nebuchadnezzar to keep the country quiet; and this was the best way to prevent any disturbance. Gedaliah then, no doubt, saw that this would not be very agreeable to the Chaldeans, and yet his humanity prevailed, and his concern for his own nation, that he not only hospitably received them, but also promised them by an oath, that there would be safety for them. He therefore exhorted them to be confident, and also to serve the Chaldeans. It was, indeed, especially expected of them, that they should surrender up

themselves, as their case was hopeless. Then Gedaliah promised that the Chaldeans would be content with a voluntary submission; and he promised them also, that there would be a safe dwelling for them in the land.

And he ordered them to *gather* wine, and corn, and fruit, and to store them up, as there would be no danger from war. He also ordered them to dwell in the *cities* which they had taken, or to which they had been driven. The verb here is ambiguous; but I prefer its most literal meaning, *which ye have taken.* They could not, indeed, have taken a city by force and arms, as they had only a few men, and could never have been equal to their enemies. Then the forcible taking of cities is not what is meant; but Gedaliah's meaning was, that they might safely remain wherever they were, or that they might dwell in any city they came to. But it was a great thing when he said to them, that he would *stand* for them; for he thus laid down his own life, as though he had said that he would be a surety that nothing grievous should happen to them. And hence it is more clearly seen that he did not regard himself, but that he used the power given him for the public good; for if he had ambition, he would have been, doubtless, more careful to ingratiate himself with the king of Babylon, and he would have resolved to deal no less cruelly with a people so hard and refractory, than their enemies. But when he extended his wings as the hen, to gather under them the residue of his own nation, it appears quite evident that he had no care for his own private safety, but that whatever power had been given him by King Nebuchadnezzar, he employed it wholly for the public good.

Then these words ought to be especially noticed, *And I, behold, I will dwell in Mizpah, that I may stand,* &c., that is, that I may meet the Chaldeans *who may come to us,* that is, lest they should come upon you for some hostile purpose. It afterwards follows—

11. Likewise, when all the Jews that *were* in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a rem-

11. Atque etiam omnes Judæi qui erant in Moab (*hoc est,* apud Moabitas) et apud filios Ammon, et apud Idumæos (et in Edom,) et quicunque erant in omnibus terris (*hoc*

nant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan;

est, qui dispersi erant per varios regiones,) audierunt quod dimisisset rex Babylonis reliquias (residuum aliquod) Jehudah, et quod præfecisset illis Godoliam filium Achikam filii Saphan;

12. Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer-fruits very much.

12. Et venerunt omnes Judæi (venerunt ergo omnes Judæi) ex cunctis locis ad quæ expulsi fuerunt et venerunt (reversi sunt) in terram Jehudah ad Godoliam in Mispath; et collegerunt vinum et fructus æstivos multos valde (*hoc est*, in magna copia.)

The Prophet shews here, that except intestine wickedness had arisen, the condition of the people would have been endurable until the time of exile had elapsed. God had prefixed, as it has been before stated, seventy years. Nebuchadnezzar had already so withdrawn the flower of the people, that still some inhabitants remained, that the land might not be wholly naked and forsaken. For besides the poor who had been left, he has already told us, that some chief men came with their troops. He now adds that *all the Jews*, who had fled to neighbouring nations, came to Gedaliah; some had taken refuge among the Ammonites, and some among the Moabites; these came and *dwelt* in the land. Then God did thus moderate the rigour of his vengeance, so that some remnants continued in Judea until the restoration of the whole people. But the perverseness of those who had before despised his favour, is on the other hand most clearly shewn. God no doubt designed to make manifest their extreme wickedness; for they not only despised the kindness of King Nebuchadnezzar, but rushed headlong to their own ruin; for their fury and madness led them on to kill their own leader, and thus all things were thrown into confusion, as this might have provoked the indignation of the conqueror to obliterate the very name of the people by slaying the captives as well as those who had been left in the land. To point out this was the object of the Prophet in this part of the chapter.

He says that *all the Jews;* he puts in the particle גַּם, *gam*, for the sake of emphasis, *and even all the Jews*, who had fled either to the Moabites or to the children of Ammon,

or to the Idumeans, or to other parts in other countries. There is no doubt but they made up a considerable number. Then the whole land must have had many inhabitants; and though it was not populous, yet the desolation that might have been feared, was not extreme. We hence conclude, that there was no over-statement made, when Gedaliah promised security to the leaders of the forces and their companions. As he then made an oath that they would all be safe, he did not deceive them, for he really proved his faithfulness, because these miserable exiles, who returned into Judea, dwelt in safety, and God also gave them a rich abundance of fruits, so that they lived comfortably in their own country. Before the city was taken these were wanderers, and no doubt they must have suffered great poverty and want. But now the Lord gave them relief, and supplied them with plenty.

But we hence know more fully how great must have been the impiety and wickedness of Ishmael and his companions, who not only had the liberty to dwell comfortably in their own country under the care and protection of Gedaliah, but who also enjoyed abundance of blessings. For as the most miserable of them gathered great abundance of fruits, they might have had a large portion of all good things. Hence then the more and the more detestable appeared their ingratitude. And it further appears how extreme and incurable was their perverseness, that they were not moved and affected, when they saw Jerusalem destroyed, the temple burnt, and the horrible slaughter which had taken place; and especially when they knew what Nebuzaradan had preached respecting God's vengeance, and had performed the office of a prophet in reproving them. That they thus so obstinately rejected the blessings of God and resisted what he did for them, was an evident proof that they were monstrously stupid; and this is what the Prophet intended to shew, as we shall hereafter see. But I must make an end here.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are not sufficiently attentive in considering thy judgments, we may learn to become wise by

the examples of others, and so to reflect on what thou teachest us by thy servants the Prophets, that we may apply it to our own use, and thus render ourselves teachable and obedient to thee, and that especially when thou chastisest us with thy scourges, we may not resist thy power, but so submit to thee, that we may at length be raised up and comforted by thy mercy and be restored to a complete salvation, through Christ Jesus our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Fourth.

13. Moreover, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,

14. And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not.

13. Et Johanan (Joannes) filius Chareah et omnes duces copiarum qui fuerant in agro, venerunt ad Godoliam in Mispath;

14. Et dixerunt ei, An sciendo scis, quod Baalis rex filiorum Ammon misit Ismael filium Nathaniæ qui percutiat te in anima? Sed non credidit illis Godolias filius Achikam.

A SAD history is here given, from which we may conclude, that God's wrath against the people had not been appeased by the destruction of the city and the burning of the Temple. It was some token of mercy, when Gedaliah was set over the remnant of the people and the poor, who had been allowed to dwell in the land. But now Gedaliah is slain, and a miserable scattering must have ensued. The wrath also of the king of Babylon was kindled, because the Chaldeans, who had been given as guards, were at the same time killed. It was then God's purpose to execute his judgment also on these remnants.

But the Prophet shews how it was that Gedaliah was killed, even because Ishmael had been hired and advised by the king of Ammon. He, says, however, that he had been warned by the sons of Kareah, of whom mention has been made, but that he had no faith in them. And hence the Prophet begins by saying, that *John the son of Kareah* and the other leaders *came* to him. He had, as we have seen, received them before, and had sworn to them that he would be their defender, so that no one would hurt them; he had undertaken to face all danger, and offered his head as a pledge that the Chaldeans would not attempt anything

against them. They *came* then to him, because with safety was connected public benefit. He had, then, bound them to himself by no common benefit, and it was for their good that he should be safe and secure, who was in favour with the king of Babylon. They therefore came and *said, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah* was suborned by the king of *Ammon*. It may have been that the king of Ammon had hoped to be the king of Judea, or to have all that land as his own after the departure of the Chaldean army. But as his expectation was disappointed, he began to attempt another thing, to render the land desolate by creating disturbances. Such then seems to have been the reason why he induced Ishmael to undertake the impious and abominable act of killing Gedaliah.

As to Gedaliah having no faith in their words, a question may be here raised, How was it that God suffered this holy man, endued with such rare virtues, to be basely killed by a traitor and an assassin? In the first place, we must hold it as true, that God's judgments are just, though they correspond not with our notions. It seems indeed, at the first glance, very unaccountable, that Gedaliah should have been slain, who yet had emerged, as it were, from death, and had obtained favour with the Chaldeans; but it was God's purpose to take him to himself, and at the same time to execute his vengeance to the utmost on the people; for we shall see that those who had been left were wholly unworthy of God's favour; and we shall also see, that as mad wild beasts they ran headlong to death, and never ceased to provoke God's wrath against them.

Let us then learn from this passage, that when God calls his servants from this world, he regards their salvation, so that death is for their good. For Gedaliah might have seen, that had he lived longer, things more bitter than hundred deaths would have happened to him. It was then God's will to take him in time, before he was overwhelmed with sorrows. For it was no small cause of grief to see the people obstinately struggling against the goodness of God, until their final ruin came. This obstinacy then might have been the cause of incredible sorrow to the holy man: hence the

Lord removed him in due time. In the meantime, as I have said, he opened a way for his wrath, so that after it became evident that the remnant that had been saved were wholly unworthy of mercy, they were destroyed together with the rest.

But, in the second place, we see that there was a fault mixed with virtue in Gedaliah. Love, indeed, is not suspicious, as Paul says, and ought not easily to admit an accusation. (1 Cor. xiii. 5.) But he ought to have been circumspect, not only for his own sake, but because his death brought with it the ruin of the whole people. He ought then to have been more cautious. But we hence learn how difficult it is even for the best of men, endued with peculiar virtues, so to conduct themselves, as not to deviate on either side. It was a praiseworthy simplicity that Gedaliah did not suspect that Ishmael would be so perfidious and so wicked; but as in this instance he shewed no regard for himself nor for the public safety, he was to be blamed. But, as I have said, it was God's purpose to remove him to his rest, for had he lived, he would have been a hundred times overwhelmed with troubles. Ungodly men may blast the memory of the holy man, because he had been so stupid: but as I have already said, that as he must have deviated either on this or that side, it was better that Ishmael should not be accused until he was found guilty. Gedaliah's only mistake was, that he disregarded the treachery of which he had been warned. It now follows—

15. Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know *it:* wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?

15. Et Joannes filius Kareah dixit ad Godoliam in secreto in Mispath, dicendo, Ibo nunc (*vel*, agedum eam) et percutiam Ismael filium Nathaniæ ita ut nemo sciat: quare percutiet te in anima,[1] et dissipabuntur totus Jehudah, qui congregati sunt ad te (*hoc est*, dissipabuntur qui congregati sunt ad te ex toto Jehudah,) et peribit residuum Jehudah?

[1] "Why should he kill (or smite) thy life?" so all the versions and the *Targum*. But נֶפֶשׁ means often a corpse or a dead body, Lev. xxi. 1; xxii. 4. Then the most obvious rendering would be, "Why should he smite thee dead?" or, "Why should he smite thee a corpse?" *Blayney* gives the meaning, but not a translation, "Wherefore should he take away thy life?"—*Ed.*

16. But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah, Thou shalt not do this thing; for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael.

16. Et dixit Godolias filius Achikam Joanni filio Kareah, Ne feceris hanc rem, quia mendacium tu loqueris contra Ismael.

We here see that the holy man was blinded, so that he not only disregarded the counsel given to him, but also rejected the help offered to him. It is again a thing worthy of praise, that he was unwilling that Ishmael should be rashly killed, the cause being not known; but he ought to have carefully inquired, and the thing being found out, he might have defended himself, and put to death a wicked man and a public pest. He was armed with the sword; and he might have justly punished Ishmael, if he had only been attentive to the matter, that is, if he had taken the trouble to ascertain the fact. As then he had been endued with authority, for Nebuchadnezzar had set him over the land, he was to be blamed in this, that he abstained from taking vengeance, (for he was not a private man,) but he did not believe that there was so great a treachery in Ishmael, whom he thought to be an honest and upright man, and friendly to him. Nevertheless, there is a medium between simplicity on the one hand, and cruelty on the other. Had he immediately become incensed against Ishmael, it would have been blameable cruelty; for we ought not to be carried away headlong to condemn innocent men; for if we indiscriminately receive all sorts of calumnies, no man can remain innocent. But as I have said, Gedaliah might have so acted as not to wrong Ishmael by believing every idle report, and yet he might have taken care of himself. He might have done this, had he inquired, and having known the case, determined accordingly; but he wilfully closed his eyes, and thus committed a great mistake.

But we hence see, that when in other things he was not without judgment and foresight, he was in this instance, as it were, destitute of a sound mind; for it was God's purpose to open a way for his judgment, so that he might destroy the remnant of the people. And at the same time we see how difficult it is not to do wrong, when we desire to be just, tolerant, and unsuspicious. We are, in short, taught,

how difficult a thing it is, and how rare is the virtue to exercise moderation. Ishmael might have been immediately convicted of perfidy and wickedness; this was what Gedaliah was unwilling to do; and why? because he was unwilling to suspect anything wrong in a man whom he thought to be sincere and faithful. Well, but at the same time he did wrong to John, the son of Kareah, and to the other leaders of the forces. They came to him, not one man or two men, but the chiefs who had been set over the soldiers by King Zedekiah. These came to him, so that their charge was probable. What did Gedaliah say? *Thou speakest falsely*, he said. He reproachfully repelled John, the son of Kareah, who yet was well disposed towards him, and wished to save him from his danger. We hence clearly see that the best of men never so act, but that under the colour of equity and humanity they often fall into sloth and neglect; and that when they wish to be humane towards one, they act unkindly and reproachfully towards many. So it is ever necessary to flee to God, that he may rule us by the spirit of discretion. Now follows the murder of Gedaliah.

CHAPTER XLI.

1. Now it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed-royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

2. Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.

3. Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, *even* with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, *and* the men of war.

1. Et accidit mense septimo, ut venerit (et venit) Ismael filius Nathaniæ filii Elisamæ, e semine regio, et proceres regis et decem viri cum eo ad Godoliam filium Achikam in Mispath, et comederunt illic panem simul in Mispath.

2. Et surrexit Ismael filius Nathaniæ, et decem viri qui cum eo erant, et percussit Godoliam filium Achikam filii Saphan gladio; et occidit eum quem præfecerat rex Babylonis in terra.

3. Et Judæos qui erant cum eo, cum Godolia, nempe, in Mispath, et Chaldæos qui inventi sunt illic, viros bellicosos percussit Ismael.

It was a detestable cruelty and barbarity in Ishmael to kill Gedaliah who entertained him, and whom he found to possess a paternal regard towards him. Heathens have ever deemed hospitality sacred; and to violate it has been counted by them as the greatest atrocity; and hospitable Jupiter ever possessed among them the right of taking vengeance, if any one broke an oath given when at table. Now Ishmael had sworn, as we have seen, that he would be faithful to Gedaliah. He was again received by him, and was treated hospitably; and from his table he rose up to slay the innocent man, who was his friend, and had acted towards him, as it has been stated, the part of a father. And hence he became not only a parricide, but also the traitor of his own country; for he knew that it could not be but that Nebuchadnezzar would become more and more incensed against that miserable people, whom he had spared: but he made no account of his own fidelity, nor shewed any regard for his own brethren, whom he knew he exposed to slaughter and ruin.

But the cause of this madness is here indirectly intimated; the Prophet says, that he was of the *royal seed.* The royal seed was then, indeed, in the greatest disgrace; the king's children had been slain; he himself had been taken away bound to Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar had made him blind. But we see, that those who had been once in any dignity, can hardly relinquish those high notions by which they are inflated. So that when those of the royal seed are reduced to extreme poverty and want, they still aim at something royal, and never submit to the power of God. The fountain then of this madness the Prophet points out here, as by the finger, when he says, that Ishmael was *of the royal seed:* for he thought that it was by no means an honour to him, that Gedaliah was set over the Jews. He, no doubt, imagined that the kingdom was to be perpetual, since God had so often promised, that the throne of David would stand as long as the moon continued in the heavens. (Psalm lxxxix. 37.) But mere ambition and pride led him to commit this abominable murder: and thus it was, that he suffered himself to be persuaded by the king of Ammon.

He then *came* together with the *princes of the king*, even those who were in the first rank when Zedekiah reigned. Then the Prophet adds, that they *did eat bread.* This phrase intimates that they were received hospitably, and were admitted to the table of Gedaliah. And this kindness and benevolence ought to have induced Ishmael and his associates to spare their host. But it follows, that they *rose up.* This circumstance, as to the time, enhanced their crime; for it was at the time they were eating that Ishmael slew Gedaliah; and thus he polluted his hands with innocent blood at the sacred table, having paid no regard to the rights of hospitality. Now the Prophet shews that this was fatal to the miserable remnant, who were permitted to dwell in the land. For, first, it could not have been done without exciting the highest indignation of the king of Babylon, for he had set Gedaliah over the land; and it was not expressed without reason, but emphatically, that this slaughter roused the displeasure of the king of Babylon, because the murder of Gedaliah was a manifest contempt of his authority. And then there was another cause of displeasure, for the Chaldeans in Mizpah, who had been given as protectors, were killed. For the Prophet tells us, that they were *men of war*, that no one might think that Chaldeans were sent there to occupy the place of the Jews, as it is sometimes the case when colonists or some such men settle in a land: they were military men, who had been chosen as a guard and protection to Gedaliah. Thus then was the wrath of the king of Babylon provoked to vent his rage on the remnant to whom he had shewed mercy. It now follows,—

4. And it came to pass, the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew *it*,

5. That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, *even* fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the Lord.

4. Et factum est die postero ex quo occiderat Godoliam, ut nemo sciret,

5. Et venerunt viri ex Sichem, e Silo et Samaria octoginta rasi barba (*vel*, rasa barba,) et laceris vestibus, et scissi (*vel*, laniati) in cute sua; oblatio autem et thus in manibus ipsorum, ut offerrent in domo Jehovæ.

The Prophet shews here, that after Ishmael had polluted his hands, he made no end of his barbarity. And thus

wicked men become hardened; for even if they dread at first to murder innocent men, when once they begin the work, they rush on to the commission of numberless murders. This is what the Prophet now tells us had happened; for after Gedaliah was killed, he says, that *eighty men came from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria,* who brought incense and offering, to present them in the Temple, and that these were led by treachery to Mizpah, there killed and cast into a pit, as we shall hereafter see.

It is not known by what cause Ishmael was induced to commit this cruel and barbarous act, for there was no war declared, nor could he have pretended any excuse for thus slaying unhappy men, who apprehended no such thing. They were of the seed of Abraham, they were worshippers of God, and then they had committed no offence, and plotted nothing against him. Why then he was seized with such rage is uncertain, except that wicked men, as we have said, never set any bounds to their crimes; for God gives them the spirit of giddiness, so that they are carried away by blind madness. It is, indeed, probable, that they were killed, because Ishmael thought that they came to Gedaliah, that they might live under his protection, and that he could not have gained anything by the murder of one man, except he obtained authority over the whole land. It was then suspicion alone, and that indeed slight, which led him to such a cruelty. And the atrocity of the deed was enhanced by what the Prophet says, that they came to offer to God *incense and offering,* מִנְחָה, *meneche:* and he says also, that they had their *beards shaven,* and their *garments torn.* Such an appearance ought to have roused pity even in the most inveterate enemies; for we know, that there is an innate feeling which leads us to pity wretchedness and tears, and every mournful appearance. The fury then of Ishmael, even if he had before determined to do some grievous thing to these men, ought to have been allayed by their very sight, so as not to be even angry with them. According then to every view of the case, we see that he must have been divested of every sense of equity, and that he was more cruel than any wild beast.

But it may be asked, How did these men come for the purpose mentioned, since the report respecting the destruction of the Temple must have spread everywhere? for they are not said to have come from Persia, or from countries beyond the sea; but that they came from places not afar off. They who answer that the report of the Temple being destroyed had not reached them, only seek to escape, but the answer is not credible, and it is only an evasion. The Temple was burnt in the fifth month; could that calamity be unknown in Judea? And then we know that Shiloh was not far from Jerusalem, nor was Samaria very distant. Since then the distance of these places cannot account for their ignorance, it seems not to me probable, that these came, because they thought that the Temple was still standing, nor did they bring victims, but only incense and oblation. I then think that they came, not to offer the ordinary sacrifice, but only that they might testify their piety in that place where they had before offered their sacrifices. This conjecture has nothing inconsistent in it; nor is there a doubt, but that before they left their homes, they had put on their mean and torn garments. These were signs, as we have elsewhere seen, of sorrow and mourning among the Orientals.

But here another question is raised, for the Prophet says, that they were *torn* or cut; and this has been deemed as referring to the skin or body: but this was forbidden by the Law. Some answer that they forgot the Law in their extreme grief, so that they undesignedly tore or lacerated their bodies. But the prohibition of the Law seems to me to have had something special in it, even that God designed by it to distinguish his people from heathens. And we may gather from sacred history, that some artifice was practised by idolaters, when they cut their bodies; for it is said, that the priests of Baal cut their bodies according to their usual manner or practice. God then, wishing to keep his people from every corruption, forbade them to imitate the rites of the heathens. And then there is no doubt but that God designed to correct excess in grief and mourning. I therefore do not think that anything contrary to the Law was done

by these men, when they came to the ruins of the Temple with torn garments and lacerated skin, for there was in them nothing affected, for so lamentable a calamity drew forth such grief, that they spared neither themselves nor their garments.

Jeremiah says, in the first of these verses, that the death of Gedaliah was concealed, so that *no one knew it;* yet such a deed could have been hardly buried; for many of the Jews were killed together with Gedaliah, and also the guarding soldiers, whom Nebuchadnezzar had given to Gedaliah. But the Prophet means that it was hid, because the report had not yet gone forth. He then speaks comparatively, when he says that it was known to none. We have already stated the purpose for which the eighty men came from Samaria and other places; it was not that they might offer sacrifices, as when the Temple was standing, but only lament the destruction of the Temple and of the city; and that as they had brought from home the greatest sorrow, they might, on their return, humble themselves, after having seen so grievous a punishment inflicted on the people for their sins.

PRAYER.

Grant, omnipotent God, that since our life is exposed to innumerable dangers, and thou settest before our eyes what happened to the best and choicest of thy servants,—O grant, that we may flee to thee, and resign ourselves wholly to thy will, that we may know that thou art the guardian of our life, so that not a hair of our head can fall without thy hidden permission, and that we may also learn to ask of thee the spirit of wisdom and discretion, so that thou thyself mayest guide our steps, as it is not in us to defend our life from those many intrigues by which we are on every side surrounded, the whole world being opposed to us, so that we may proceed in the course of our pilgrimage under thy care and protection, until we shall be removed into that blessed rest, which is laid up for us in heaven by Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Fifth.

6. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he

6. Et egressus est Ismael filius Nathaniæ obviam ipsis e Mispath, ambulans ambulando et flens; et

went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.

7. And it was *so*, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, *and cast them* into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that *were* with him.

factum est cum occurrisset illis, tunc dixit illis, Venite ad Godoliam filium Achikam.

7. Et factum est cum venissent in medium urbis, tunc jugulavit (*vel*, mactavit) eos Ismael filius Nathaniæ ad medium fossæ, ipse et viri qui erant cum eo.

Here Jeremiah relates another circumstance in the nefarious conduct of Ishmael, that by flatteries he enticed simple men, who feared no evil, and while pretending kindness, slew them. The slaughter was in itself very detestable, but added to it was the most abominable deceit, for he pretended to weep with them, and offered an act of kindness, to bring them to Gedaliah, and then he traitorously killed them! We hence see that it was an act of extreme wickedness. In saying that he *wept*, it was no doubt a sign of feigned piety.[1] He saw these good men in torn garments and in tears on account of the Temple being destroyed, he therefore pretended that he had the same feeling. This was falsely to pretend a regard for God, and his tears were those of the crocodile; for he shed tears as though he lamented the ruin of the Temple and of the city. He thus gained the confidence of the unwary men, and then after having led them into the middle of the city, he slew them. The place also is mentioned, *nigh to the middle of the pit*, for so I render it, rather than *in the middle*, for it is not credible that he killed them in the pit itself; but when led to the pit they were killed and were cast into it, as we shall see.[2] He then slew them at the outside of the pit, and immediately cast them in.

It may, however, be asked, Whether he could with so few attack with success so many men? for it seems strange, that as they were eighty men they did not resist; they might at least have frightened their enemies. But we must, in the first place, recollect that they were, as we have seen, un-

[1] The words may be thus literally rendered,—

And Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, went out from Mizpah to meet them, walking, walking and weeping, &c.

He went on foot, and wept as he went out.—*Ed.*

[2] "At the pit," is the *Sept.*; "About the middle of the pool," is the *Vulg.* and the *Targ.* It was evidently a ditch or a trench made for the defence of the city. See verse 9.—*Ed.*

armed; for they had brought only a sacred offering with incense; but the others were armed and well trained for war; they had also been reduced to a state of hopeless despair, so that they had doubtless contracted great ferocity, as those who are continually in danger accustom themselves to acts of cruelty. Ishmael, then, and his companions were armed, but the others were without any arms, and were also simple men and in no degree accustomed to war. Hence it was that they were killed like sheep, while Ishmael and his associates were like wolves, altogether ferocious. It now follows,—

8. But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not; for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbare, and slew them not among their brethren.

8. Decem autem homines inventi sunt in ipsis qui dixerunt (et dixerunt, *copula resolvi debet hoc modo;* dixerunt *ergo*) ad Ismael, Ne interficias nos, quia sunt nobis opes reconditæ in agro, triticum et hordeum (*sunt pluralis numeri, sed durum esset Latine dicere,* tritica et hordea) et oleum et mel: et cessavit (*vel,* destitit,) et non occidit eos in medio fratrum suorum.

We here see that the barbarity of Ishmael was connected with avarice. He was indeed inflamed with ferocious madness when he slew simple and innocent men; but when the hope of gain was presented to him, he spared some of them. Thus then we see that he was a lion, a wolf, or a bear in savageness, but that he was also a hungry man, for as soon as he smelt the odour of prey, he spared ten out of the eighty, who, it is probable, thus redeemed their life and returned home. So in one man we see there were many monsters; for if he hated all those who favoured Gedaliah, why did he suffer these to escape? even because avarice and rapacity prevailed in him.

It is then added, that he *slew them not in the midst of their brethren*, that is, when they were exposed to death and were mixed with the others, so that their condition seems to have been the same. The Prophet says, that they were spared, even because Ishmael sought nothing else but gain. And it is probable that in a state of things so disturbed he was not furnished with provisions and other things. As, then, want urged him, so he became moderate, lest his cruelty should cause a loss to him.

Here also is set before us the inscrutable purpose of God, that he suffered unhappy men to have been thus slain by robbers. They had left their houses to lament the burning of the Temple. As then the ardour of their piety led them to Jerusalem, how unworthy it was that they should become a prey to the barbarity of Ishmael and his associates? But as we said yesterday, God has hidden ways by which he provides for the salvation of his people. He took away Gedaliah; his end indeed was sad, having been slain by Ishmael whom he had hospitably entertained. Thus God did not suffer him to be tossed about in the midst of great troubles. For John, the son of Kareah, who yet was a most faithful man, would have become soon troublesome to the holy man; for he became soon after the head and ringleader of an impious faction, and ferociously opposed Jeremiah. Had then Gedaliah lived, he would have been assailed on every side by his own people. It was then God's purpose to free him at once from all these miserable troubles. The same thing also happened to the seventy who were slain; for the Lord removed them to their rest, that they might not be exposed to the grievous evils and calamities which afterwards soon followed; for none could have been in a more miserable state than the remnant whom Nebuchadnezzar had spared. We have then reason in this instance to admire the secret purpose of God, when we see that these unhappy men were killed, who yet had gone to Jerusalem for the sake of testifying their piety. It was, in short, better for them to have been removed than to have been under the necessity of suffering again many miseries. It now follows,—

9. Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men (whom he had slain because of Gedaliah) *was* it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: *and* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *them that were* slain.

9. Fovea autem in quam projecit Ismael illuc (*sed abundat*[1]) omnia cadavera hominum, quos percussit in plaga Godoliæ (*vel*, propter Godoliam, *ut alii vertunt*) ipsa est quam fecerat rex Aza propter Baaza regem Israel; hanc replevit Ismael filius Nathaniæ interfectis.

The Prophet tells us by the way that the trench was made

[1] It is not redundant, for it is the idiom of the language: and so it is in *Welsh*, though the present version is not correct, which ought to be as follows,—"A'r clawdd (not pydew) yr hwn y bwriodd Ishmael iddo," &c. —*Ed.*

by King Asa, when he fortified the city against the attack of Baasha, as it is related in the sixteenth chapter of Second Chronicles. For Baasha, having collected an army, made an attack on the land of Judah and began to build the city, that he might thus keep the Jews as it were besieged, and make thence daily incursions, and where he might safely take his forces together with the spoils. Asa then hired the king of Syria, and induced him to break the treaty which the two kings of Syria and Israel had made with one another. Thus Baasha was forced to leave the work unfinished, and thence Asa is said to have carried away the gathered stones, that thereby the trench might be formed. There is indeed no mention of the trench; but we may conclude that it was then formed, in order that it might interpose between the enemy and the city. But it may seem strange that the trench was in the midst of the city, except perhaps that Asa built a fortress within the town, that if he was overcome by his enemy, he might take refuge there with his men of war, as we know that citadels are often built in the middle of cities as fortresses, as places of refuge. Asa then built this trench, that should the king of Israel take the city, he might not penetrate farther, but be kept back by the interposing trench. But only in things uncertain are conjectures to be allowed.

But the Prophet increases the indignity of the deed, when he says, that the *trench was filled with the slain.* It was formed for a very different end and purpose, even that the king of Judah, when reduced to the greatest straits, might have the trench as a defence against the violence of his enemies, so that he might protect his kingdom and his subjects. But now the slain were cast into the trench, not the Syrians nor the Israelites, but Jews themselves and God's pious worshippers. What then had been made for the public benefit of the people, was made by Ishmael a place for the slaughter of good men. And hence, as it has been said, the atrocity of the deed was more enhanced. It afterwards follows,—

10. Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that *were* in Mizpah, *even* the king's

10. Et captivum cepit Ismael quod residuum erat populi, quod erat in Mispath, nempe filias regis,

daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

et totum populum qui relictus fuerat in Mispath quem commiserat Nabuzardan princeps interfectorum Godoliæ filio Achikam (*vel*, cui residuo populi præfecerat Godoliam, *eodem sensu*, filium Achikam:) accepit ergo Ismael filius Nathaniæ, et profectus est ut transiret ad filios Ammon.

It is not known whether Ishmael had this design at the beginning, or whether, when he saw that he had no power to stand his ground, he took the captives with him, that he might dwell with the king of Ammon. It is, however, probable that this was done according to a previous resolution, and that before he slew Gedaliah, it was determined that the remnant should be drawn away to that country. Perhaps the king of Ammon wished to send some of his own people to dwell in Judea; thus he hoped to become the ruler of Judea, and also hoped to pacify the king of Babylon by becoming his tributary. It was, however, a great thing to possess a land so fertile. However this may have been, there is no doubt but that the king of Ammon hoped for something great after the death of Gedaliah. And it is probable that for this reason the people were drawn away, to whom an habitation in Judea had been permitted.

The Prophet now tells us, that Ishmael *took* the remnant of the people *captives*. And it appears that in a short time he had a greater force than at the beginning; for he could not with a few men collect the people, for the number of those who had been left, as we have seen, was not inconsiderable: and they were dispersed through many towns; and Ishmael could not have prevailed on them by his command alone to remove to the land of Ammon. But after he had killed Gedaliah, his barbarity frightened them all, and no doubt many joined him; for an impious faction ever finds many followers when any hope is offered them. All then who were miserable among the people followed him as their leader; and thus he was able to lead away the whole people as captives.

But here again a question arises, that is, respecting the *daughters of the king;* for the poor and the obscure, who

were of the lowest class, had alone been left; and the royal seed, as we have seen, had been carried away. But it is probable that some of the king's daughters had escaped when the city was besieged; for Ishmael himself was of the royal seed, but he had escaped before the city was taken. Nebuchadnezzar then could not have had him as a captive. The same was the case with the daughters of the king, whom Zedekiah might have sent to some secure places. And Gedaliah afterwards brought them together when he saw that it could be done without danger or hazard of exciting suspicion: he had indeed obtained this power, as we have before seen, from Nebuzaradan. Though then Gedaliah ruled over the poor and those of no repute, yet the daughters of the king, who had been removed to quieter places, afterwards dwelt with him; and so Ishmael, and John the son of Kareah, and other leaders of the army, came to him: the reason was the same.

But it is again repeated, *and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan had committed to Gedaliah,* or, over whom he appointed Gedaliah, as we have before seen. But the repetition was not made without reason; for Jeremiah expressed again what was worthy of special notice, that the fury and violence of Ishmael were so great that he did not see that the mind of Nebuchadnezzar would be so exasperated as to become implacable; but his madness was so furious that he had no regard for himself nor for others.

He then says that he *took away captive the* people, and *went that he might pass over to the children of Ammon.* Thus their condition was much worse than if they had been driven into exile; for the Ammonites were in no degree more kind than the Chaldeans; nay, they were exposed there, as we shall hereafter see, to greater reproaches; it would indeed have been better for them and more tolerable, had they been at once killed, than to have been thus removed to an exile the most miserable.

It hence appears that Ishmael was wholly devoid of all humane feelings, having been thus capable of the impiety of betraying the children of Abraham. For where there is ambition, it often happens that a lust for empire impels men

to deeds of great enormity; but to draw away unhappy people to the Ammonites was certainly an act more than monstrous.

As to the people, we shall hereafter see that they deserved all their reproaches and miseries; and this calamity did not happen to them except through the righteous providence of God. For though they were freed, as we shall see, by the son of Kareah, yet they soon went into Egypt, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Prophet, and his severe denunciations in case they removed there. Though then the base and monstrous cruelty of Ishmael is here set before us, let us yet know that the Jews deserved to be driven away into exile, and to be subjected to all kinds of miseries.

Oh, miserable sentence! when it is said, that there were slain seventy men *in the hand of Gedaliah.*[1] Some render "hand," as I have noticed, "on account of Gedaliah;" and others, "in the place of Gedaliah." But as this explanation seems forced, we may take hand for stroke or wound; and this seems the most suitable meaning, as hand is often so taken in Scripture. They were then slain in the wound of Gedaliah, that is, they were slain in like manner with him, as it were in addition to the wound he received. Let us now proceed,—

11. But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done,

12. Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that *are* in Gibeon.

11. Et audivit Joannes filius Kareah et omnes duces copiarum, qui cum eo erant, omne malum quod perpetraverat Ismael filius Nathaniæ;

12. Et sumpserunt omnes homines, et profecti sunt ad prœliandum cum Ismael filio Nathaniæ, et invenerunt (*vel*, assecuti sunt) ipsum ad aquas magnas (*alii vertunt*, multas, *sed non placet*) quæ sunt in Guibeon.

Here the Prophet informs us, that Ishmael did not attain his wishes; for he had resolved to sell, as it were, the people

[1] This is in the ninth verse. The words are omitted in the *Sept.*; "on account of Gedaliah," is the *Vulg.* and the *Targ.*; which is the same with our version. "Along with Gedaliah," is *Blayney's*. The word "hand," often means power, authority, dominion. (Gen. ix. 2; Jud. i. 35.) Then the rendering would be, "on account of the power of Gedaliah;" and this would give the passage the most emphatic meaning: Ishmael smote them because he envied the power given to Gedaliah, which these men, by coming to Mizpah, acknowledged and supported.—*Ed.*

that they had to do with God, who had bound them to himself when he adopted them as his peculiar people, and then favoured them with so many blessings. Since then God had made himself known to them, they could not reject his counsel with impunity, for there was no pretext of ignorance. We hence see what weight there is in this, *your God;* for Jeremiah reminded them that they could not with impunity trifle with God, for they were not their own, but had been chosen to be God's people, and on this condition, to be wholly subject to his authority. Then the sum of the whole is this, that the Prophet would faithfully convey to the Jews the answer God would give them; and he said this that his doctrine might have a greater authority among them. It now follows,—

5. Then they said to Jeremiah, The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us.

6. Whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.

5. Ipsi autem dixerunt ad Jeremiam, Erit Jehova inter nos in testem (*vel*, testis) fidei et veritatis (testis fidelis et verax,) nisi secundum omnem sermonem quem miserit (*id est*, pro quo miserit) Jehova Deus tuus ad nos, sic facturi sumus;

6. Sive bonum, sive malum, voci Jehovæ Dei nostri, pro qua nos mittimus te ad ipsum, obediemus (audiemus vocem, *ad verbum, sed tantundem valet*, audire vocem atque obedire voci,) ut bene sit nobis, cum obediverimus voci Dei nostri.

It hence appears that the people understood for what purpose Jeremiah, before he consulted God, assured them of his faithfulness and sincerity; for it was not without reason that they promised to be obedient to God; but as they saw that they were suspected as being not sincere by Jeremiah, and as he had promised to be a true and faithful teacher, they on the other hand declared that they would be sincere disciples, and would receive whatever God might command them. But they soon betrayed their perfidy, for when they heard that what they had resolved to do did not please God, they not only rejected the counsel of God and the Prophet, but treated him insolently, and even loaded the holy man with reproaches, as though he had told them what

trated them. But it was God's will that he should remain alive; for he fled, as it appears from what follows,—

15. But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.

15. Et Ismael (Ismael autem) filius Nathaniæ servatus est (*vel*, evasit) cum octo hominibus a facie Joannis, et profectus est ad filios Ammon.

He indeed met with bad success; he fled before his enemy, when the whole people forsook him, when he lost his soldiers; and he could not come without the greatest disgrace before the king of Ammon. It seems, however, very strange that he was allowed to flee away; for how was it that God did not execute those well-known sentences,—"He who smites with the sword shall perish by the sword;" "Whosoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed?" (Matt. xxvi. 52; Rev. xiii. 10; Gen. ix. 6.) Ishmael had not only killed a man, but the governor of the people, and that governor by whose protection and favour a remnant had been preserved as a seed; and he had also killed all whom he had found with him; and lastly, he had killed seventy men, with whom he had no strife, no war, no quarrel. As, then, Ishmael had so polluted himself with innocent blood, and with so many murders of good men, how was it that he was suffered to escape?

As we have before said, God does not now observe an equal, or the same course in his judgments; for he often extends the life of the most wicked, that they may be exhibited, as it were, as a spectacle; nor does the truth of the words, "Whosoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed," become evanescent; but God has various ways by which he renders a just reward to murderers and assassins. And we ought to notice what is said in the book of Psalms, "Slay them not, lest my people should forget." (Ps. lix. 11.) The Psalmist there asks God not to destroy immediately the wicked; for an oblivion of a remarkable punishment might easily creep in, if God executed it suddenly and instantly. But when God impresses a mark of his curse on the impious and the wicked, and prolongs their life, it is the same as though he placed them in a theatre to be looked on leisurely and for a long time. Conspicuous, then, are the marks of

God on the impious, when God pursues them slowly and by degrees, and summons them, in a manner, day by day before his tribunal. There is, therefore, no doubt but that God thus executed vengeance on the barbarity of Ishmael.

For how was it that he killed Gedaliah? even because he was of the royal seed, and foolish pride still filled his heart, though God by his powerful hand had broken down whatever dignity that once belonged to the royal seed, yea, he had completely torn it to pieces; and yet this man cherished his own ferocity. Hence God executed on him a two-fold punishment, by depriving him of his company; for he went to the king of Ammon, whom he had no doubt flattered with great promises, and from whom he also expected no common rewards,—he went there a fugitive with his eight companions, and also filled with confusion, and he saw no hope of a return. Thus, then, it happened that he was despised and reprobated; and this was, no doubt, more bitter to him than if he had suffered ten deaths.

Let us then learn not to form our judgment according to the present appearance of things; but let us patiently wait while God makes openly known to us the various ways he adopts in punishing the wicked; nay, this ought especially to serve as a confirmation to our faith, when we see the godly cruelly slain, and the wicked remaining in security; for it hence follows that we are to look for another judgment of God, which does not yet appear. For if God rendered to each his just reward, then the Sadducees would have some ground to boast that there is not another life; but when things are thus in a state of confusion in the world, we know that God's judgment is suspended and deferred to another time. Then this variety or confusion, if you please, confirms our minds in the hope of the last judgment, and of a blessed resurrection. I cannot now proceed further.

PRAYER.

Grant, omnipotent God, that as this world is filled with the filth of the wicked, and as we are on every side surrounded with enemies,—O grant, that we may learn to flee under thy protection, and so hide ourselves under the shadow of thy wings, that we

may look nowhere else for safety but from thy defence; and that we may also know that as to everything that happens to us, our life and our death are so ordered by thy wonderful providence, that all events help forward our salvation, so that we may go onward, not only through many calamities, but, if need be, through the midst of slaughters, until we shall come to that blessed rest, which thine only-begotten Son has obtained for us by his own blood.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Sixth.

16. Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, (after *that* he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam,) *even* mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon:

17. And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Beth-lehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

18. Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

16. Et sumpsit Joannes filius Kareah et cuncti principes (duces) copiarum qui erant cum eo omnes reliquias populi, quas reduxerant ab Ismaele filio Nathaniæ e Mispath, postquam percusserat Godoliam filium Achikam, viros fortes, viros belli (*hoc est*, bellicosos,) et mulieres et pueritiam et eunuchos quos reduxerat a Guibeon:

17. Et profecti sunt et sederunt (*vel*, substiterunt) in Geruth-Chimcham, quæ est prope Bethlehem, ut proficiscerentur ad ingrediendum in Ægyptum,

18. Propter Chaldæos, quia timebant ab ipsis (*ad verbum*, a facie ipsorum,) quia percusserat Ismael filius Nathaniæ Godoliam filium Achikam, quem præfecerat rex Babylonis in terra.

The Prophet now shews, that though some kind of virtue appeared in John the son of Kareah, he was not yet of a right mind. He was an energetic and a discreet man, but he discovered his unbelief, when he led the remnant of the people into Egypt, while the Prophet was forbidding such a thing. He already knew that this was not lawful, but his obstinacy was two-fold more, when the Prophet repudiated his project, as we shall see. This passage then teaches us, that though the leaders of the forces, who had put Ishmael to flight, and avenged his perfidy, were men of courage, and shewed regard for the public good, they were destitute of faith: there was thus wanting in them the chief thing, that is piety and the fear of God.

Then the Prophet says, that *John* and the rest *took the remnant of the people whom they had recovered from Ishmael, from Mizpah*, not that they were recovered from that place, but that Ishmael had brought the unhappy people captives from Mizpah, as we have seen; but they had all been recovered at Gibeon, according to what is said at the end of the verse. But he says that they were *valiant men*, גברים, *geberim*, (he so calls them on account of their courage, for an explanation follows,) and *men of war*, אנשׁי המלחמה, *anushi emelecheme*. He then calls them *valiant* or brave, and afterwards he explains what that virtue was, even because they were warlike men. He says further, that there were *women* mixed with them, and *children*, and *eunuchs*, who once lived in the king's court; and as we have before seen, there were among them the king's daughters. Gedaliah then had collected together a considerable number of men, not only from the lower orders, but also from the higher class, whose wealth and rank were not common while the kingdom was standing.

But the Prophet immediately adds what the purpose was which they had all formed. They dwelt, he says, *in Geruth;* some render it, "in the peregrination;" but it seems to me to be a proper name, and I agree with those who so render it.[1] But it is called the *Geruth of Chimham*, of whom mention is made in 2 Sam. xix. 31, 37. He was the son of Barzillai, who entertained David when a fugitive from his kingdom, and entertained him bountifully. When David wished to remunerate his kindness, the good man made his age as an excuse, and said, that he was old, so that he could not enjoy the things of this life; but he presented his son to David, and it is probable that this place was given to the son as a reward. It was hence called Geruth-Chimham, the name of its possessor being attached to it. And he says that it was *nigh Bethlehem*. It is also probable, that when David wished to

[1] It is given as a proper name in the *Sept.*; the idea of peregrination is given in the *Vulg.* and *Targ.* If it be a common noun, its proper meaning is not peregrination, but habitation or dwelling, or rather dwellings, it being in the plural number. *Blayney* takes it as a proper name.—*Ed.*

remunerate his host, he chose a place nigh his own city, where he was born.

It is added, *to go*, &c. Then the Prophet shews that this was not a settled habitation, but that they intended to go into *Egypt*. They knew that this was forbidden by the Law of God, and the Prophets had often pronounced a curse on such a design. Notwithstanding God's prohibition, they prepared themselves for the journey. Fear was the cause; but how much soever they might have justly feared, they ought yet to have considered what God permitted: for if a sick man takes poison instead of medicine, he must suffer the punishment that necessarily follows his own presumption and madness; so they who seek to provide for themselves contrary to God's will, gain only their own destruction. This was done, as the Prophet tells us, by the remnant of the people.

He then says, that they were there for a time, but that they looked forward to Egypt, *on account*, he says, *of the Chaldeans*, because they feared them, and for this reason, *because Ishmael had killed Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had set over the land*. This fear was not without reason; but they might have sent persons to the king of Babylon, and have thrown the blame on the right person, and cleared themselves; and the matter might have been settled. They might then have easily obtained pardon from King Nebuchadnezzar; but as no fear of God prevailed in them, they did not consider what was lawful, and were by a blind impulse led into Egypt. Thus fear was no alleviation to their crime, for there was another remedy at hand, which God would have blessed. But when they disregarded God's word, and followed what their own feelings dictated to them, they contrived in a very bad way for themselves. But far worse is what follows.

CHAPTER XLII.

1. Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least even unto the greatest, came near,

1. Et accesserunt cuncti duces copiarum, et Joannes filius Kareah, et Jezaniah filius Ozamæ, et totus populus a parvo usque ad magnum,

2. And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, *even* for all this remnant; (for we are left *but* a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us;)

3. That the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

2. Et dixerunt ad Jeremiam prophetam, Cadat agedum precatio nostra coram facie tua, et ores pro nobis Jehovam Deum tuum pro omnibus reliquiis istis, quia relicti sumus exiguum e magno, sicuti oculi tui vident nos;

3. Et annuntiet nobis Jehova Deus tuus viam, per quam ambulemus, et rem quam faciamus.

I have said that John, and his associates, and the whole people acted much more culpably by coming to the Prophet, than if they had not done so, and had gone directly to Egypt: for they either came dissemblingly, and thus designedly spoke what was false, or they were extremely stupid, and hypocrisy had wholly deprived them of their understanding. They came to the Prophet to ask counsel; nay, that he might be to them God's interpreter, and that thus they might know what to do; and they promised to obey, as we shall hereafter see. However this may have been, they sought an oracle in which it was their duty to acquiesce, except they resolved openly to shake off the yoke and to shew themselves to be gross and profane despisers of God. They came to the Prophet, when yet it was their fixed purpose, as we shall see, to go to Egypt.

He who asks counsel, ought first to see that he bring no prejudice, but be free and honest: but it is, however, a fault too common, that men deliberate and ask counsel, when they have already settled what to do; nay, nothing is more common than this; for those who consult do not, for the most part, wish to learn what is right, but that others should fall in with their own inclinations. He who has resolved on this or that point, pretends that he is in doubt, and held in suspense; he asks what ought to be done: if the answer be according to his wishes, he embraces what is said; but if he who is consulted, disapproves of what he has already resolved to do, he rejects the counsel given. Such was the dissimulation described by the Prophet, when the leaders of the forces and the whole people came to him.

He mentions, first, the *leaders of the forces*, and then *John the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshiah.* He

adds these two last; but it was to give them honour, as when the angel said, "Go and tell his disciples and Peter." (Mark xvi. 7.) He did not put aside Peter, as though he was inferior to all the rest; but for the sake of honour he mentions his name, after having spoken generally of them all. So also here, the Prophet names generally the *leaders*, but as John the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah were the chief men, he expressly gives their names. He adds, the whole people, *from the least to the greatest.* This does not refer to age; but what he means is, that all, of every grade, came with one consent to Jeremiah. It was not then the conspiring of a few men, but all from the least to the greatest had resolved to go to Egypt; and yet they came, as though with an honest purpose, to the Prophet; wherefore? They wished their own perverse design to be approved by God, and thus to subject God to their own will and humour; for they did not suffer themselves to be ruled by his Spirit, but audaciously disregarded his word. The Prophet then shews that they were all implicated in the same sin.

It is added, that they *said*, as though they were ready to obey, *Let our prayer fall before thee.* This, as we have said, when addressed to God, is an evidence of humility; but it is applied here to man; and when the Hebrews make a humble request, they say, "Let my prayer fall before thee," that is, Hear what I suppliantly and humbly ask. *Pray*, they said, *to Jehovah thy God for us.* They called him the God of Jeremiah, not that they intended to exempt themselves from his authority; they did not mean that they were alienated from God; but in this way they extolled Jeremiah, and acknowledged him to be God's true and lawful Prophet. In short, this saying refers to the prophetic office, as though they had said, that Jeremiah had hitherto confirmed his vocation, so that it was clearly evident that he had been sent from above.

We hence see why they called Jehovah the *God* of Jeremiah, not as though they had rejected God, and as though he was not their God in common with Jeremiah, but they allowed that the Prophet possessed a higher honour, and that his faithfulness and integrity were beyond controversy.

But this admission justly recoiled on their own head; for if Jeremiah was God's Prophet, why did they not instantly obey him, after knowing that what he faithfully told them he had received from God? and why did they insolently and ferociously resist him and accuse him of falsehood? Their own admission then was not sincere, but a fallacious flattery, as is the case with all hypocrites, who never speak in sincerity and truth.

They afterwards added, *Pray for all this remnant, for we are left, a few from many.* This they added to produce pity, in order that they might more easily obtain from Jeremiah what they asked; nor was that difficult; but as they felt conscious of wrong, they sought the favour of the Prophet by flatteries. Had they asked him without disguise, they knew that he was of himself disposed to seek the wellbeing of the people; but as they were of a double mind, they set before him their miserable state, which might have roused the Prophet still more to make intercession to God for them. And for this reason they added, *as thine eyes see us.* And they set before him this sad spectacle, to create sympathy in the Prophet. And it then follows, *And may Jehovah thy God shew us the way in which we are to walk.* They now explained more clearly why they wished prayer to be made for them, even that God might answer and shew what he wished them to do.

They came then, as it has been stated, as though they were ready to obey; and then they professed humility, because they did not wish to do anything rashly, but only to follow where God called them. Had they spoken from the heart, it would have been a rare virtue thus to have fled in perplexities to God, and to have allowed themselves to be ruled by his word; but we shall see that it was all a pretence. We have then here set before us the hypocrisy of that people, so that we may learn that whenever we ask what pleases God, we should bring a pure and sincere heart, so that nothing may prevent or hinder us immediately to embrace whatever God may command us. But their hypocrisy is discovered to have been still baser, when the Prophet adds,

4. Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard *you*; behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, *that* whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare *it* unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.

4. Et dixit illis Jeremias Propheta, Audivi, ecce ego orabo Jehovam Deum vestrum secundum sermones vestros, et erit quemcunque sermonem responderit Jehova vobis, annuntiabo vobis, non celabo a vobis quicquam.

In order to prepare them to obey, he testified that he would be a faithful messenger of God; for there is no doubt but that the Prophet, as we shall see, regarded them with suspicion. That he might therefore have them teachable and obedient to the answer expected from God, he said beforehand, that he would honestly and faithfully perform his office as a Prophet.

I have heard, he says; here he shews how ready he was to attend, and how he neglected nothing conducive to their wellbeing. *I have heard*, he says, *Behold, I will pray according to your words.* There is no doubt but that he thus intimated that he wished well to them; and it might have rendered them more attentive to the oracle to know that the Prophet was influenced by love. Nor is there a doubt but that the Prophet testified his love towards them, that his doctrine might afterwards have more weight with them.

By saying, *Whatever your God will answer*, he did not mean that the oracle would be revealed to all, for the words could not be otherwise explained than through the Prophet, who would openly make known to the whole people what he heard from God's mouth. But he says, that the answer would be given to them, because God would give the answer which was to be communicated to all, as it is said that God spoke to Moses, and also to all the people, for the doctrine was intended for all. Moses did not receive the law, nor its interpretation, in his own private character, but in order that the people might know what was right. So Jeremiah did here; the answer he received from God he made known as belonging in common to all the people.

But in calling God *their God*, he did not mean to flatter them or to praise their piety, but to exhort them to surrender and devote themselves wholly to God, as though he had said,

To this God answers, by pointing out the manner, for he would *deliver* them from his hand.

He confirms the same thing in other words, *I will shew mercies to you.* Some explain this as meaning, that God would be merciful towards them; and I allow that this is the first reason why they ought to have entertained hope; but I doubt not but that the Prophet refers here to Nebuchadnezzar, as though he had said, "I will turn the heart of the king of Babylon to mercy, so that he will deal mercifully with you." For God is said to shew mercies, when he forgives, and when he reconciles those who have sinned to himself; but he is said also to shew mercies, when he inclines the hearts of men to mercy. For this reason Jacob says, "God will shew you mercies before the man." (Gen. xliii. 14.) But I abstain from other proofs on a point which ought to be well known.

The sum of what is said then is, that Nebuchadnezzar would be humane and merciful towards the Jews, because it was in God's power to change his heart. For we know that God turns as he pleases the hearts of men; and he often changes wolves into sheep. The meaning then is, that though Nebuchadnezzar boiled with hatred towards the people, and was prepared wholly to destroy the remnant, there yet would be a remedy in God's hand, for he could soften his hardness, pacify his wrath, and from a savage wild beast make him a father, merciful, as it were, towards his children.

Now this passage teaches us, that the hearts and purposes of men are governed by a power from above, so that enemies, even the worst, while they rage against us, are moved not only by their own feelings, but also by the hidden working of God, and according to his counsel, as he would have them thus to try our faith. For if God moderates those who boil with anger and wrath, and renders them placable to us; so also he lets loose the reins to those who rage against us, and not only so, but he also stirs them up, when his purpose is to punish us for our sins, according to the doctrine taught us everywhere in Scripture. So in Psalm cvi., it is said that God turned the hearts of the heathens to hate his people. But here, on the other hand, God promises, that Nebuchad-

nezzar would be kind and humane, so as to spare the Jews, because he would control his heart, and shew them mercy by inclining the king to forgive the people.

This then ought to be carefully noticed; for when we see ourselves surrounded on every side by the ungodly whom Satan drives to madness, so that they seek no other thing than to tread us under their feet, especially when they have the power to destroy us, except we feel fully assured, that their hearts, feelings, and all their thoughts are in God's hands, we must necessarily be wholly disheartened. Hence to mitigate all our fears, it avails us much to hear that men's hearts are turned and ruled according to the will of God. It now follows,—

13. But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God,

14. Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:

15. And now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;

16. Then it shall come to pass, *that* the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.

17. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt, to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them

13. Quod si dixeritis vos, Non habitabimus in terra hac, non obediendo voci Jehovæ Dei vestri;

14. Dicendo, Non, quia (*vel*, sed) in terram Ægypti ibimus (*nam* כִּי *potest adversative capi*,) ubi non videbimus prœlium, et vocem tubæ non audiemus, et ad panem non esuriemus, et habitabimus illic:

15. Nunc propterea audite sermonem Jehovæ, residuum Jehudah, quia sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Si vos ponendo posueritis facies vestras ad ingrediendum Ægyptum (ut ingrediamini in Ægyptum,) et ingressi fueritis illic ad peregrinandum;

16. Erit (accidet) ut gladius quem vos timetis ab eo (*hoc est*, a quo metuitis) illic apprehendat vos (*vel*, occurrat vobis illic, *nempe*) in terra Ægypti, et fames a qua extimescitis (*hoc est*, propter quam estis anxii, (*vel*, quam expavescitis, *nam* דאג *utrunque significat*) illic apprehendet vos (*vel*, adhærebit vobis, *sed ad verbum*, apprehendet post vos, *vel*, persequetur vos, *nempe*) in terra Ægypti, et illic moriemini.

17. Et erunt omnes viri qui posuerint facies suas ut veniant in Ægyptum ad peregrinandum illuc morientur gladio, fame et peste, et non erit illis superstes aut evasor

shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.

(*id est*, qui evadat) a facie mali quod ego adduco super eos.

God having promised, that the counsel he gave to the Jews would be good and safe, now, on the other hand, threatens them, that if they disobeyed, everything they would attempt would end miserably. They had not expressly asked whether it would be for their good to go into Egypt, or whether it would be pleasing to God; but God, who penetrates into all hidden purposes, anticipated them, and declared that their going would be unhappy, if they fled into Egypt. We hence see how the Prophet, or rather God himself, who spoke by his servant, tried by all means to keep them in the way of duty.

He then says, *If ye say, We shall not dwell in this land*, it shall be ill with you, he says: but before he denounced punishment, he shewed that they deserved to be destroyed, if they went to Egypt; for had the thing been in itself lawful, yet to attempt such a thing against the express will of God was, as we know, an impious and a diabolical presumption and rashness. God had forbidden them specifically in his Law ever to set their hearts on Egypt, (Deut. xvii. 16;) and he had often confirmed the same thing by his Prophets, (Isa. xxx. 2; xxxi. 1;) and now again he seals the former prophecies, as he expressly forbids them to go to Egypt. The Prophet then sets this crime before their eyes: "If ye flee into Egypt, what is it that compels you? even because ye will not obey God." There is then great weight in these words, *Nor obey the voice of Jehovah your God;* as though he had said, that they could not think of Egypt, except they designedly, as it were, rejected the authority of God, and resisted his counsel.

He adds, *Saying, No; for we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall not see war*, &c. Here the Prophet discovers the very fountain of rebellion, namely, that they paid no regard to God's favour. They were indeed exposed to many dangers in their own land, which produced fear and trembling, and its desolation also might have filled them with horror and weariness; but as God had declared that their safety would be cared for by him, how great and how base

an ingratitude it was to deem as nothing that aid which he had freely promised! The Prophet then, in condemning their disobedience, shews at the same time the cause of it, even that unbelief led them away from rendering obedience to God. *If*, then, *ye say, No*,—this word was a proof of their obstinacy; but he adds, *We shall go* into Egypt, *where we shall not see war, where we shall not hear the sound of the trumpet*, as though, indeed, the promise of God were false or void. But the Prophet here discovers their hidden impiety, that they did not recumb on God's promise. They promised then to themselves a peaceable life in Egypt. Was it in their power to effect this? and God, what could he do? he had declared that they would be safe and secure in the land of Canaan. It was to charge God with falsehood, to hope for rest in Egypt, and to imagine nothing but disturbances in the land where God bade them to remain in quietness.

We now then see why he says, *We shall go into Egypt, where we shall not see war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor hunger for bread.* They promised to themselves an abundance of all blessings, for the land of Egypt was fruitful. But could not God afflict them with want? The Egyptians, we know, had also been sometimes visited with famine. We hence see why God so much condemned the design of the people as to their going into Egypt; for they entertained vain hopes, and at the same time charged God indirectly with falsehood.

He adds, *Hear the word of Jehovah, ye remnant of Judah.* Jeremiah, by thus addressing them, no doubt endeavoured to lead them to obedience. We indeed know that men in prosperity are in a manner inebriated, so that they are not easily induced to obey sound counsels. For whence comes it that kings and princes of the world indulge themselves so much, and allow such license to their lusts? even because the splendour of their fortune inebriates them. So also private men, when all things succeed according to their wishes, they lodge in their own dregs; hence it is that they are difficult to be ruled. The Prophet, on the other hand, shews that there is no reason for them to be proud. *Ye are*, he says, a small number, and God has wonderfully saved

you. *Hear*, then, *ye remnant of Judah.* In short, they are reminded of their humble and miserable condition, that they might be more teachable. But this also was done without any fruit, as we shall hereafter see.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel. Of these words we have spoken elsewhere. God is often called the God of hosts on account of his power: so by this term God sets forth his own greatness. Afterwards when he is said to be the *God of Israel*, we know that the benefit of adoption was thus brought to the recollection of the people; for God had them especially as his people, and bound them as it were to himself. This ought then to have been a most holy bond of faithfulness and obedience. It was not, then, by way of honour that the Prophet thus spoke, but in order to reprove the Israelites for their hardness and ingratitude towards God. *If*, he adds, *ye set your faces to go into Egypt, and ye enter in there to sojourn, it shall be that the sword which ye fear shall meet you*, &c. Here is their punishment described, and there is nothing obscure in the words. God shews that they were greatly deceived, if they thought that they would be prosperous in Egypt; for no prosperity can be hoped except through the favour and blessing of God; and God pronounced a curse on all their perverse counsels when he saw that they would not be restrained by his word. If, then, we attempt anything contrary to the prohibition of God, it must necessarily end unsuccessfully; and why? because the cause of all prosperity is the favour of God, and so his curse always renders all issues sad and unhappy: and however prosperous at first may be what we undertake against God's will, yet the end will be wretched and miserable, according to what the Prophet teaches here.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not once only shewn to us the way and the end to which we ought to proceed, but art pleased daily to stretch forth thy hand to us, and dost by thy constant exhortations invite and stimulate us to go onward,—O grant, that we may attend to thy voice, and so renounce all the corrupt desires and lusts of our flesh, that nothing may hinder us

wholly to submit to thee, and so to follow whithersoever thou mayest call us, that we may at length come to that blessed rest, which thou hast prepared for us in heaven through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Eighth.

18. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.

18. Quoniam sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Sicuti fusa est iracundia mea et excandescentia mea super habitatores Jerusalem, sic fundetur excandescentia mea super vos cum veneritis in Ægyptum; et eritis in execrationem et in stuporem et in maledictum et in probrum; et non videbitis amplius locum hunc.

THE Prophet confirms what he had already said, by an example of God's vengeance, which had lately been shewn as to the Jews; for though the destruction of the city and the Temple had been often predicted to them, they yet had become torpid as to God's threatenings. God, however, after having delayed for a long time, at length executed what he had threatened. They had then seen that dreadful example, which ought to have filled them, and also their posterity, with fear. Then the Prophet, as he saw that they were so tardy and stupid that they thoughtlessly derided God's threatenings, reminded them of what they had lately seen. "Ye know," he says, "how God's fury had been poured forth on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, such also will be poured forth on those who will flee into Egypt."

Now Jeremiah was able to speak with authority, as he had been the herald of that vengeance now mentioned. If any other had declared in God's name what had happened, they might have objected and said, that they had indeed been justly punished by God, but that it did not hence follow that what he said was true; but as the Prophet had for forty years often and constantly denounced on them what at length they had really and by experience found to have been predicted to them from above, he was able to repeat a similar judgment of God with the highest authority, as he now does.

Thus saith Jehovah, he says, *as my fury was poured forth*, &c. The similitude is taken either from water or from metals: hence some give this rendering, "As my fury flowed down;" but the verb used by Jeremiah means properly to pour forth. It may, however, as I have said, be applied to water, which spreads when poured out, or to metals, which being liquid spread here and there. He then means, that all who should go to Egypt would be wretched and miserable; for wheresoever they might try to withdraw themselves, the vengeance of God would yet find them though exiles, for it would spread like a deluge over all the inhabitants, so that they would in vain seek hiding-places. We now see the design of the Prophet. The meaning is, that as the Jews had by their calamity known him to have been a true and faithful servant of God in foretelling the destruction of the city and Temple, so would they find now, except they repented, that the message by which he threatened a second destruction, had come also from God. *Poured forth*, he says, *shall be mine indignation on you when ye come into Egypt.*

He afterwards adds a passage from the Law, which often occurs in the Prophets, that they would be an *execration*, an *astonishment*, a *curse*, and a *reproach*. The word אָלָה, *ale*, which we have rendered "execration," means properly an oath; but as imprecation is often added, when we wish to be believed, it is also understood as an execration. He then says that they would be an *execration*, that is, a formula of execration, as we have elsewhere explained. Whosoever then had a wish to express a curse, they would, as the Prophet says, use this form as a common proverb, "May God curse thee as he did the Jews,"—"May I perish as the Jews perished." In short, he intimates that the punishment would be so horrible that men would turn it to a common proverb. He adds, *And an astonishment*, that is, that God's vengeance would be so dreadful, that all would be filled with amazement. He further adds, *And a curse and a reproach.* The sum of what is said is, that God would inflict on the Jews not a common punishment, but such as would be remembered among all the heathens, in order that it might

appear that their wickedness in obstinately rejecting the prophetic word was not light.

He lastly adds that they should *never see* their own land; for it was not the design of the Jews to dwell perpetually in Egypt; for they pretended that they remained firm and constant in their dependence on God's promise, and boasted that they had a hope of a return, because God had fixed seventy years for their exile. As they then thus foolishly gloried, that they hoped in God for the promised favour, he says that they were shut out as to any hope of a return; for though God would restore the other captives dispersed throughout the East, yet the Egyptian guests were doomed to die in their exile. This then was to cut off from them every hope, in order that they might know that they were wholly rejected, and would have a place no more among God's people, however they might wish to be deemed the first. It follows,—

19. The Lord hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah, Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.

20. For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do *it*.

21. And *now* I have this day declared *it* to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, nor any *thing* for the which he hath sent me unto you.

19. Loquutus est Jehova contra vos, reliquiæ Jehudah, Ne eatis in Ægyptum; sciendo sciatis quod contestatus fuerim vos hodie:

20. Quoniam fefellistis animas vestras (*aut*, fallaces fuistis in animabus vestris) quando misistis me ad Jehovam Deum vestrum, dicendo, Ora pro nobis Jehovam Deum nostrum; et secundum omnia quæ locutus Jehova Deus noster fuerit, sic annuntia nobis et faciemus.

21. Ego autem annuntiavi vobis hodie, et non audivistis vocem Jehovæ Dei vestri, et secundum omnia propter quæ misit me ad vos.

Here the Prophet explains more fully their sin; for their punishment might have appeared extreme, had not their impiety been more clearly unfolded. He then says that this punishment ought not to be regarded as too rigid, because God had not once only protested against the Jews and admonished them in a solemn manner and before witnesses; but they to the last not only despised his counsel and warnings, but proudly rejected them. And he adds, that they *dealt falsely and perfidiously* with God, because they pretended that they would be obedient as soon as the will of

God was known; but they shewed that in reality they had no such purpose; for their own vanity and deceit took full possession of them when the Prophet answered them in God's name; nor had they a desire to obey God.

Let us now consider the words: *Jehovah hath spoken against you, the remnant of Judah.* He again calls them a *remnant,* in order that they might remember that they had no reason any more to be proud. We know how the Jews while in prosperity disregarded the Prophets; for they were inebriated with their good fortune. But God had dissipated this pride, with which they were previously filled. The Prophet had also set before them the favour through which they had been liberated, that they might learn hereafter to submit to God and his word. For this reason then he called them a remnant, even to render them more attentive and teachable. But it was done without any benefit; for though their affairs were nearly hopeless, and they were reduced almost to nothing, yet they had not laid aside their high spirits. They were then still swollen with false confidence. But this warning, however, availed to render them more inexcusable.

If ye enter into Egypt, he says, *knowing know ye,* or, *knowing ye shall know.* The verb is in the future tense, though it may be taken as an imperative. But the future tense is the most suitable, *knowing ye shall know,* that is, the event itself will teach you, but too late, as the foolish are never wise till after the evil has taken place. *Knowing ye shall know that I have protested against you this day.* God says that he had left nothing undone to bring the Jews to a right mind; for a protest is usually made in a solemn manner, witnesses being called in, so that no one can plead that he has gone astray through ignorance. To take away then every ground of excuse, witnesses were wont to be called. Hence God speaks according to the common practice and in a forensic sense, and says that he had *protested* against the Jews, lest they should by chance offend through want of knowledge. It then follows, that they knowingly perished, as though they had sought their own destruction.

He now adds another circumstance, that they had sent

him under the pretence of rare piety, as though they were in every way ready to render obedience to God. But he first says that they had *deceived* themselves, or had been deceived. The verb תעה, *toe*, from which the *Hithpael* comes, means to err or go astray. But interpreters do not agree; for some give this explanation, that they deceived the Prophet in their hearts, that is, that they craftily retained their perverse design of going to Egypt, and at the same time professed that they were ready to obey. But as the Prophet's name is not mentioned here, this explanation seems unnatural. I therefore prefer the other explanation, that they deceived themselves; and ב, *beth*, is here redundant, as in many places: *Ye deceived*, then, *your own souls, when ye sent me*, he says, *to Jehovah*. The Prophet intimates that when they sought to act craftily they were deceived; for God is wont to discover the astute, and when they devise this or that, they only weave snares and toils for themselves; and we see that craftiness ever brings the ungodly to ruin. The Prophet, according to this sense, derides that perverse affectation of astuteness, when the ungodly seek to deceive God; and he says that they deceived themselves, as we see also daily. Then he says that they themselves had been the authors of the evil, for they had brought themselves to ruin by their astute and crafty counsel, when they *sent* him to Jehovah. The כי, *ki*, is to be taken here as an adverb of time, *When ye sent me to Jehovah your God, saying, Pray for us.*[1]

[1] All the versions and the *Targum* differ as to the construction of these two verses, the 19th and the 20th, and modern authors too. I offer the following rendering,—

19. The word of Jehovah to you, the remnant of Judah, *is this*, Enter not into Egypt; knowing, know (or, surely know,) that I make this pro-
20. test to you this day. Verily, ye do go greatly astray against your own selves; for ye sent me to Jehovah your God, &c., &c.

The first clause is according to the *Vulg.* The express message was, not to enter into Egypt. What they were to know and remember was the protest he made to them. Then in verse 20th, he charges them with inconsistency, that they went astray from their own professions, and afterwards he specifies what they had promised. There is, according to this view, a consistency in the whole passage. The word *soul* is often taken for the person: "against your own selves," is literally "against your own souls." The meaning of the phrase is, that they belied themselves, as it is evident from what follows. The past tense in Hebrew may often be

He reproves them not only for perfidy, but also for sacrilege, because they wickedly profaned the name of God. For it was not to be endured that they should pretend a regard for religion, and testify that they would be obedient to God, and should at the same time cherish in their hearts that perverse intention which afterwards they discovered. And hence he not only relates that he had been sent, but that he had also been solicited to intercede for them. It was then a twofold sacrilege, for they had asked what would please God, and afterwards disregarded the prophecy,—and then they offered a prayer, and when God gave them an answer by his servant, they counted it as nothing! We now perceive why Jeremiah so expressly mentioned these two things.

Pray for us to our God, and according to all which Jehovah our God shall say, relate thou to us: the people *seemed* to act with wonderful sincerity; they exhorted the Prophet to dissemble nothing, to add nothing and to diminish nothing. What better can be wished than that men should lay aside all ambiguity and all evasions, and not wish God's words to be corrupted? And this the Jews expressed in high terms, *Whatever Jehovah our God shall answer, declare thou to us.* Here they seemed to have more zeal than Jeremiah himself; for they enjoined a law, that he should add nothing and diminish nothing, but that he should be a faithful interpreter of God's will. They seemed then to be half-angels. They afterwards testified that they would *do whatever* God should *command* them.

He at length adds, *And I have this day declared it to you.* Here he sets forth his own fidelity, not for the sake of boasting, but that their impiety might be reproved, who at length despised the oracle of God, which they had boasted that they would obey. *Ye have not hearkened,* he says, *to the voice of Jehovah your God, and according to all the things on account of which he hath sent me to you.* The Prophet again confirms the truth, that it was their own fault that the Jews did not follow what was right, and also what was for their

rendered by the present, as it refers to time up to the present and including the present. The future also in Hebrew may be rendered by the present, because it refers often to what is now and continues to be.—*Ed.*

good, for he had faithfully delivered to them what God had commanded. He now adds,—

22. Now therefore know certainly, that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go *and* to sojourn.

22. Et nunc sciendo scitote (*hic* תדעו *imperative sumendum est sine controversia*) quod gladio et fame et peste moriemini in loco ad quem appetitis ire, ad peregrinandum illic.

The Prophet at length concludes his discourse, after having mentioned the reasons why God would deal so severely with them, even because their perfidy, impiety, ingratitude, and obstinate contempt were unsufferable. After having then shewn that they had no reason to expostulate as though God were extremely rigid, he at length declares what end awaited them, even that they should *die by the sword, famine, or pestilence*, that is, that there would be no hope of safety to them, because if they escaped from the sword, they should be beset with famine, and if they evaded the famine, they should be destroyed by pestilence. It is a common mode of speaking with the Prophets, as it is well known, that when they intimate that the ungodly in vain hope for impunity, they represent God as having at his command all kinds of punishment.

Ye shall then, he says, *die in that place which ye seek for your sojourn.* He again shews the object of the people, for they did not intend to dwell perpetually in Egypt, but only for a time, until there was liberty to return to their own country. In short, they wished to be restored, as it were, against God's will; and yet they ceased not falsely to put forward the name of God, as hypocrites, who mock God, always do. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XLIII.

1. And it came to pass, *that* when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the Lord their God, for which the Lord their God had sent him to them, *even* all these words.

2. Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men,

1. Et factum est quum finiisset Jeremias loqui ad totum populum cunctos sermones Jehovæ Dei ipsorum, pro quibus miserat ipsum Jehova Deus ipsorum ad ipsos omnes (*inquam*) hos sermones;

2. Tunc dixit Azarias filius Ozaiæ, et Joannes filius Kareæ, et omnes duces, et omnes viri superbi, dicentes

saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely; the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there.

3. But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.

Jeremiæ, Mendacium tu loqueris, non misit te Jehova Deus noster ad dicendum, Ne eatis in Ægyptum ad peregrinandum illic:

3. Sed Baruch filius Neriæ incitat te contra nos, ut tradat nos in manum Chaldæorum ad interficiendum nos et transferendum nos Babylonem.

Here the Prophet proceeds with the remaining part of the narrative. He says that the *whole people* obstinately persevered in their wicked design, so that he effected nothing by his warning and protest. Now this stupidity of the people was monstrous; for they had found out by experience the fidelity of the Prophet for many years; and further, they had gone to him because they believed that he was a faithful and an approved servant of God. He had not merely answered them in God's name, but as he knew their hardness, he added protestations which might have moved even stones. But he addressed the deaf; and it hence appears that they were wholly fascinated by the devil. And thus let us learn not to mock God, nor bring a double heart when we inquire as to his will, but to suffer ourselves to be ruled by his word.

Now he says, that when he had *finished speaking to the whole people, as God had commanded, then John the son of Kareah, and Azariah the son of Hoshaiah*, being the first among them, spoke against him. As to Azariah, we cannot know with any certainty what he was. But we have here in John the son of Kareah an example deserving of notice. We have seen that he was a bold, wise, and prudent man, and also of an upright mind. In short, when we consider what the Prophet has before said of him, we cannot but think he was by nature a heroic man; nay, when he is compared with Gedaliah, who, at the same time, was an excellent man, and whom the Prophet has adorned with high commendations, he yet far excelled him. Gedaliah, indeed, had a kind disposition, he was courageous in protecting the people, he was a man of integrity; and, besides, he was a father to the people, and so conducted himself when things

were in a hopeless state, that, beyond the expectation of all, he gathered together the remnant of the people; and we have also seen that by his efforts the Prophet had been delivered from instant death. But John the son of Kareah had been a remarkable helper to him, having come to him of his own accord, and offered to him his assistance; and further, he faithfully and prudently warned him to beware of the perfidy of that unprincipled man, by whom he was afterwards killed. Gedaliah fell through extreme credulity. John, then, the son of Kareah, had a greater appearance of excellency than Gedaliah had exhibited. But what does the Spirit of God now declare respecting him and his associates? They are said to have been proud and obstinate. We hence see that some men excel in greatness of mind, and are yet of a refractory disposition; and this is for the most part the case during a disturbed state of things. For some come forth wonderfully courageous; but when things do not fall in with their wishes, they become ferocious and rebel against God and men, and besides, they will never bear to be brought under submission. Such, then, was John the son of Kareah: at one time he manifested extraordinary virtue, but at length it appeared what he really was.

The Prophet, with the authority of a judge, declares that he and his associates were *proud: then Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and John the son of Kareah, and all the proud men,* said, *A falsehood dost thou speak.* This was extremely insolent and reproachful; for they had lately testified that they regarded Jeremiah as God's faithful servant, and that they would receive whatever he might bring as God's true oracle; but now they charge him with falsehood! how great was this presumption! But it hence appears how deep and various, and how tortuous are the recesses which are in the hearts of men; for at one time they announce honied words, and afterwards they utter nothing but virulence. So from the same mouth, as it were, almost in the same moment, comes forth what is sweet and what is bitter.

Let us hence learn that the heart of man is full of every kind of deceit, until it be cleansed by the Spirit of God. We also see, when once impiety boils up, to what extremes

it will proceed; for these men were not only insolent and reproachful towards Jeremiah, but also towards God himself. And they did not now make evasions as before, nor did they raise objections; but they openly raved against the Prophet. Thus hypocrisy has indeed for a time its coverings, but when the ungodly are urged by God, then they observe no bounds: *Thou speakest what is false.*

They afterwards throw the blame on Baruch, who had been the Prophet's faithful servant. As they could not find out any reason why Jeremiah should speak falsely, they turned their fury against Baruch. They did not then spare Jeremiah for honour's sake, but as they had no reason whatever to speak evil of him, they fixed the blame on Baruch, who yet was as innocent as Jeremiah. *Baruch,* they said, *excites thee against us.* Had Jeremiah so prophesied through the influence of another, yet his crime might have been at least extenuated. Now they said that he was mendacious, and brought forth nothing but impositions; but the ungodly do not regard what they say, for the devil drives them on headlong. And they charged Baruch with a very great crime, that he wished to betray them to the Chaldeans, and then to expose them to slaughter, and to deliver them that they might be driven into exile. All this would have been the greatest cruelty. But then if we consider what sort of man Baruch had been, and how innocently he had conducted himself, how he had endangered his life in defending the true worship of God and prophetic doctrine, there was surely no reason for loading him with so great a reproach.

But we see that God's servants have been always exposed to extreme reproaches, even when they have exhibited the greatest integrity. If then, at this day, we hear of evil reports, after having laboured to act uprightly, it ought not to appear to us a hard or a new thing to bear them with patience. We must, indeed, do what we can to stop the mouths of the malevolent and the wicked; nor ought we to give occasion, as Paul admonishes us, to the malignant. But when we have done our duty faithfully, if yet dogs bark at us, if we be loaded with many reproaches and crimes, let us learn patiently to endure them. This, then, ought to be

done by us, since we see that Baruch was accused of extreme perfidy and cruelty.

What now had Baruch to do with the Chaldeans? Had he fled to them? Was he anxious to gain influence for himself? or to procure favour for himself? There was no such thing; he always followed Jeremiah wherever he went. Jeremiah had indeed obtained some favour; but this was to be attributed to the gratuitous kindness of God. Baruch, then, had got leave from the Chaldeans to remain with the Prophet; for the condition of both was the same. But yet he had not followed the Chaldeans, when his option was given to him. For when the Chaldeans offered quietness and rest to Jeremiah, Baruch might have also gone to that fertile country; but he chose to remain in the land. We hence see that he had removed from himself every suspicion, and yet he could not stop the mouths of the malevolent, but they slandered and calumniated him. Let us then know that God's servants prove their firmness and constancy, when they are assailed on every side by the calumnies of men, and yet are satisfied with the testimony of their own conscience, and go on in their course, and look forward to the judgment of God, and care not what men think or speak, provided God approves of them, and is their judge in heaven.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we see what thou didst formerly threaten to all the despisers of thy word, we may learn to suffer ourselves to be ruled by thee, and so surrender all our powers and faculties to thy will, that we may receive immediately without any dispute whatever thou commandest, and so prove our sincerity, that our deeds may correspond with our words, and that our life may shew that we do not falsely profess thy holy name, but declare what we have in our minds and what thou thyself knowest, until the last day shall at length appear, when the books shall be opened, and all the thoughts of men shall be revealed, so that we may then appear upright in thy sight, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Ninth.

4. So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the Lord, to dwell in the land of Judah;

4. Et non audivit Joannes filius Kareah, neque omnes principes (duces) copiarum, neque totus populus, vocem Jehovæ, ut habitarent in terra Jehudah.

THE Prophet had sufficiently shewn that John the son of Kareah and the rest had not in good faith inquired of the Prophet what the will of God was; for when they saw that God's counsel did not harmonize with their wicked and foolish desire, they rose up against the Prophet. But he now more clearly condemns their obstinacy in not obeying God; and it is said emphatically, that they did not obey the voice of God, because they denied that God had spoken. Though then they sought to evade, Jeremiah on the other hand declares, that he was a true interpreter of God's will, that he had announced nothing but what had come from God. He then brings them all in as guilty, the leaders and the whole people, that no man might think it strange that innocent men, willing to submit to God, were driven into Egypt. Hence the Prophet shews here that they were all implicated in the same sin, since the leaders alone did not resist the oracle, but also the whole people. It now follows,

5. But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah;

6. *Even* men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah.

7. So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord. Thus came they *even* to Tahpanhes.

5. Et assumpsit Joannes filius Kareah et cuncti duces copiarum reliquias Jehudah, quæ reversæ fuerant e cunctis gentibus, ad quas illuc expulsæ fuerant (*sed abundat* illuc) ad habitandum in terra Jehudah;

6. Nempe viros et mulieres (*assumpsit tam viros quam mulieres,*) et pueritiam et filias Regis, et omnem animam, quam reliquerat Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, apud Godoliam filium Achikam, filii Saphan, et apud Jeremiam Prophetam, et apud Baruch filium Neriæ:

7. Et venerunt in terram Ægypti, quia non obedierunt voci Jehovæ, et venerunt usque ad Taphnees.

The Prophet now gives us a narrative of what he had briefly touched upon. He then says that John and the rest

of the leaders took the remnant of the people, who were there alive, and those who had returned from various countries; for many had become fugitives among the Moabites and the Idumeans, when they saw the city surrounded by the forces of King Nebuchadnezzar. Then they fled here and there, as it usually happens [illegible] the issue of the war. But after Nebuchadnezzar [illegible] parted, and a permission had been given [illegible] collect what remained of the people and [illegible] cities and towns, many returned [illegible] late; for they had dwelt with [illegible] ably treated. As then they [illegible] own land nor find any [illegible] is usual with men [illegible] dwelling. They then returned, that they might live under the protection of Gedaliah.

Now the Prophet says, that they were taken [illegible] brought into *Egypt*. This then was the way [illegible] shewed their obstinacy. We hence see [illegible] these leaders have been, that they [illegible] Egypt, though it was shewn to be a fatal [illegible] not indeed at that time any army of [illegible] Judea, though his vengeance might have been [illegible] And then, having fled to Egypt, they might have been [illegible] treated there, and not hospitably received. [illegible] perceive, that when men once shake off the [illegible] are hurried on by a diabolical madness [illegible] *unsurmountable to them*. Had they [illegible] *they acted rightly*, they might have raised [illegible] ments as excuses; but when they followed [illegible] sity, they in a manner, so to speak [illegible] Impiety then is always full of rashness [illegible] as we see that the ungodly thus rush [illegible] when God pronounces a curse on their [illegible] ings, let us learn to take encouragement [illegible] for he promises a joyful and blessed [illegible] we follow the ways pointed out by him [illegible] *other leaders of the forces took the* [illegible]

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God was known; but they shewed that in reality they had no such purpose; for their own vanity and deceit took full possession of them when the Prophet answered them in God's name; nor had they a desire to obey God.

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He now adds another circumstance, that they had sent

him under the pretence of rare piety, as though they were in every way ready to render obedience to God. But he first says that they had *deceived* themselves, or had been deceived. The verb תעה, *toe*, from which the *Hithpael* comes, means to err or go astray. But interpreters do not agree; for some give this explanation, that they deceived the Prophet in their hearts, that is, that they craftily retained their perverse design of going to Egypt, and at the same time professed that they were ready to obey. But as the Prophet's name is not mentioned here, this explanation seems unnatural. I therefore prefer the other explanation, that they deceived themselves; and ב, *beth*, is here redundant, as in many places: *Ye deceived*, then, *your own souls, when ye sent me*, he says, *to Jehovah*. The Prophet intimates that when they sought to act craftily they were deceived; for God is wont to discover the astute, and when they devise this or that, they only weave snares and toils for themselves; and we see that craftiness ever brings the ungodly to ruin. The Prophet, according to this sense, derides that perverse affectation of astuteness, when the ungodly seek to deceive God; and he says that they deceived themselves, as we see also daily. Then he says that they themselves had been the authors of the evil, for they had brought themselves to ruin by their astute and crafty counsel, when they *sent* him to Jehovah. The כי, *ki*, is to be taken here as an adverb of time, *When ye sent me to Jehovah your God, saying, Pray for us.*[1]

[1] All the versions and the *Targum* differ as to the construction of these two verses, the 19th and the 20th, and modern authors too. I offer the following rendering,—

19. The word of Jehovah to you, the remnant of Judah, *is this*, Enter not into Egypt; knowing, know (or, surely know,) that I make this pro-
20. test to you this day. Verily, ye do go greatly astray against your own selves; for ye sent me to Jehovah your God, &c., &c.

The first clause is according to the *Vulg.* The express message was, not to enter into Egypt. What they were to know and remember was the protest he made to them. Then in verse 20th, he charges them with inconsistency, that they went astray from their own professions, and afterwards he specifies what they had promised. There is, according to this view, a consistency in the whole passage. The word *soul* is often taken for the person: "against your own selves," is literally "against your own souls." The meaning of the phrase is, that they belied themselves, as it is evident from what follows. The past tense in Hebrew may often be

He reproves them not only for perfidy, but also for sacrilege, because they wickedly profaned the name of God. For it was not to be endured that they should pretend a regard for religion, and testify that they would be obedient to God, and should at the same time cherish in their hearts that perverse intention which afterwards they discovered. And hence he not only relates that he had been sent, but that he had also been solicited to intercede for them. It was then a twofold sacrilege, for they had asked what would please God, and afterwards disregarded the prophecy,—and then they offered a prayer, and when God gave them an answer by his servant, they counted it as nothing! We now perceive why Jeremiah so expressly mentioned these two things.

Pray for us to our God, and according to all which Jehovah our God shall say, relate thou to us: the people *seemed* to act with wonderful sincerity; they exhorted the Prophet to dissemble nothing, to add nothing and to diminish nothing. What better can be wished than that men should lay aside all ambiguity and all evasions, and not wish God's words to be corrupted? And this the Jews expressed in high terms, *Whatever Jehovah our God shall answer, declare thou to us.* Here they seemed to have more zeal than Jeremiah himself; for they enjoined a law, that he should add nothing and diminish nothing, but that he should be a faithful interpreter of God's will. They seemed then to be half-angels. They afterwards testified that they would *do whatever* God should *command* them.

He at length adds, *And I have this day declared it to you.* Here he sets forth his own fidelity, not for the sake of boasting, but that their impiety might be reproved, who at length despised the oracle of God, which they had boasted that they would obey. *Ye have not hearkened,* he says, *to the voice of Jehovah your God, and according to all the things on account of which he hath sent me to you.* The Prophet again confirms the truth, that it was their own fault that the Jews did not follow what was right, and also what was for their

rendered by the present, as it refers to time up to the present and including the present. The future also in Hebrew may be rendered by the present, because it refers often to what is now and continues to be.—*Ed.*

good, for he had faithfully delivered to them what God had commanded. He now adds,—

22. Now therefore know certainly, that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go *and* to sojourn.

22. Et nunc sciendo scitote (*hic* תֵּדְעוּ *imperative sumendum est sine controversia*) quod gladio et fame et peste moriemini in loco ad quem appetitis ire, ad peregrinandum illic.

The Prophet at length concludes his discourse, after having mentioned the reasons why God would deal so severely with them, even because their perfidy, impiety, ingratitude, and obstinate contempt were unsufferable. After having then shewn that they had no reason to expostulate as though God were extremely rigid, he at length declares what end awaited them, even that they should *die by the sword, famine, or pestilence,* that is, that there would be no hope of safety to them, because if they escaped from the sword, they should be beset with famine, and if they evaded the famine, they should be destroyed by pestilence. It is a common mode of speaking with the Prophets, as it is well known, that when they intimate that the ungodly in vain hope for impunity, they represent God as having at his command all kinds of punishment.

Ye shall then, he says, *die in that place which ye seek for your sojourn.* He again shews the object of the people, for they did not intend to dwell perpetually in Egypt, but only for a time, until there was liberty to return to their own country. In short, they wished to be restored, as it were, against God's will; and yet they ceased not falsely to put forward the name of God, as hypocrites, who mock God, always do. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XLIII.

1. And it came to pass, *that* when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the Lord their God, for which the Lord their God had sent him to them, *even* all these words.

2. Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men,

1. Et factum est quum finiisset Jeremias loqui ad totum populum cunctos sermones Jehovæ Dei ipsorum, pro quibus miserat ipsum Jehova Deus ipsorum ad ipsos omnes (*inquam*) hos sermones;

2. Tunc dixit Azarias filius Ozaiæ, et Joannes filius Kareæ, et omnes duces, et omnes viri superbi, dicentes

saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely; the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there.

3. But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.

Jeremiæ, Mendacium tu loqueris, non misit te Jehova Deus noster ad dicendum, Ne eatis in Ægyptum ad peregrinandum illic:

3. Sed Baruch filius Neriæ incitat te contra nos, ut tradat nos in manum Chaldæorum ad interficiendum nos et transferendum nos Babylonem.

Here the Prophet proceeds with the remaining part of the narrative. He says that the *whole people* obstinately persevered in their wicked design, so that he effected nothing by his warning and protest. Now this stupidity of the people was monstrous; for they had found out by experience the fidelity of the Prophet for many years; and further, they had gone to him because they believed that he was a faithful and an approved servant of God. He had not merely answered them in God's name, but as he knew their hardness, he added protestations which might have moved even stones. But he addressed the deaf; and it hence appears that they were wholly fascinated by the devil. And thus let us learn not to mock God, nor bring a double heart when we inquire as to his will, but to suffer ourselves to be ruled by his word.

Now he says, that when he had *finished speaking to the whole people, as God had commanded, then John the son of Kareah, and Azariah the son of Hoshaiah,* being the first among them, spoke against him. As to Azariah, we cannot know with any certainty what he was. But we have here in John the son of Kareah an example deserving of notice. We have seen that he was a bold, wise, and prudent man, and also of an upright mind. In short, when we consider what the Prophet has before said of him, we cannot but think he was by nature a heroic man; nay, when he is compared with Gedaliah, who, at the same time, was an excellent man, and whom the Prophet has adorned with high commendations, he yet far excelled him. Gedaliah, indeed, had a kind disposition, he was courageous in protecting the people, he was a man of integrity; and, besides, he was a father to the people, and so conducted himself when things

were in a hopeless state, that, beyond the expectation of all, he gathered together the remnant of the people; and we have also seen that by his efforts the Prophet had been delivered from instant death. But John the son of Kareah had been a remarkable helper to him, having come to him of his own accord, and offered to him his assistance; and further, he faithfully and prudently warned him to beware of the perfidy of that unprincipled man, by whom he was afterwards killed. Gedaliah fell through extreme credulity. John, then, the son of Kareah, had a greater appearance of excellency than Gedaliah had exhibited. But what does the Spirit of God now declare respecting him and his associates? They are said to have been proud and obstinate. We hence see that some men excel in greatness of mind, and are yet of a refractory disposition; and this is for the most part the case during a disturbed state of things. For some come forth wonderfully courageous; but when things do not fall in with their wishes, they become ferocious and rebel against God and men, and besides, they will never bear to be brought under submission. Such, then, was John the son of Kareah: at one time he manifested extraordinary virtue, but at length it appeared what he really was.

The Prophet, with the authority of a judge, declares that he and his associates were *proud: then Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and John the son of Kareah, and all the proud men,* said, *A falsehood dost thou speak.* This was extremely insolent and reproachful; for they had lately testified that they regarded Jeremiah as God's faithful servant, and that they would receive whatever he might bring as God's true oracle; but now they charge him with falsehood! how great was this presumption! But it hence appears how deep and various, and how tortuous are the recesses which are in the hearts of men; for at one time they announce honied words, and afterwards they utter nothing but virulence. So from the same mouth, as it were, almost in the same moment, comes forth what is sweet and what is bitter.

Let us hence learn that the heart of man is full of every kind of deceit, until it be cleansed by the Spirit of God. We also see, when once impiety boils up, to what extremes

it will proceed; for these men were not only insolent and reproachful towards Jeremiah, but also towards God himself. And they did not now make evasions as before, nor did they raise objections; but they openly raved against the Prophet. Thus hypocrisy has indeed for a time its coverings, but when the ungodly are urged by God, then they observe no bounds: *Thou speakest what is false.*

They afterwards throw the blame on Baruch, who had been the Prophet's faithful servant. As they could not find out any reason why Jeremiah should speak falsely, they turned their fury against Baruch. They did not then spare Jeremiah for honour's sake, but as they had no reason whatever to speak evil of him, they fixed the blame on Baruch, who yet was as innocent as Jeremiah. *Baruch,* they said, *excites thee against us.* Had Jeremiah so prophesied through the influence of another, yet his crime might have been at least extenuated. Now they said that he was mendacious, and brought forth nothing but impositions; but the ungodly do not regard what they say, for the devil drives them on headlong. And they charged Baruch with a very great crime, that he wished to betray them to the Chaldeans, and then to expose them to slaughter, and to deliver them that they might be driven into exile. All this would have been the greatest cruelty. But then if we consider what sort of man Baruch had been, and how innocently he had conducted himself, how he had endangered his life in defending the true worship of God and prophetic doctrine, there was surely no reason for loading him with so great a reproach.

But we see that God's servants have been always exposed to extreme reproaches, even when they have exhibited the greatest integrity. If then, at this day, we hear of evil reports, after having laboured to act uprightly, it ought not to appear to us a hard or a new thing to bear them with patience. We must, indeed, do what we can to stop the mouths of the malevolent and the wicked; nor ought we to give occasion, as Paul admonishes us, to the malignant. But when we have done our duty faithfully, if yet dogs bark at us, if we be loaded with many reproaches and crimes, let us learn patiently to endure them. This, then, ought to be

done by us, since we see that Baruch was accused of extreme perfidy and cruelty.

What now had Baruch to do with the Chaldeans? Had he fled to them? Was he anxious to gain influence for himself? or to procure favour for himself? There was no such thing; he always followed Jeremiah wherever he went. Jeremiah had indeed obtained some favour; but this was to be attributed to the gratuitous kindness of God. Baruch, then, had got leave from the Chaldeans to remain with the Prophet; for the condition of both was the same. But yet he had not followed the Chaldeans, when his option was given to him. For when the Chaldeans offered quietness and rest to Jeremiah, Baruch might have also gone to that fertile country; but he chose to remain in the land. We hence see that he had removed from himself every suspicion, and yet he could not stop the mouths of the malevolent, but they slandered and calumniated him. Let us then know that God's servants prove their firmness and constancy, when they are assailed on every side by the calumnies of men, and yet are satisfied with the testimony of their own conscience, and go on in their course, and look forward to the judgment of God, and care not what men think or speak, provided God approves of them, and is their judge in heaven.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since we see what thou didst formerly threaten to all the despisers of thy word, we may learn to suffer ourselves to be ruled by thee, and so surrender all our powers and faculties to thy will, that we may receive immediately without any dispute whatever thou commandest, and so prove our sincerity, that our deeds may correspond with our words, and that our life may shew that we do not falsely profess thy holy name, but declare what we have in our minds and what thou thyself knowest, until the last day shall at length appear, when the books shall be opened, and all the thoughts of men shall be revealed, so that we may then appear upright in thy sight, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Fifty-Ninth.

4. So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the Lord, to dwell in the land of Judah;

4. Et non audivit Joannes filius Kareah, neque omnes principes (duces) copiarum, neque totus populus, vocem Jehovæ, ut habitarent in terra Jehudah.

The Prophet had sufficiently shewn that John the son of Kareah and the rest had not in good faith inquired of the Prophet what the will of God was; for when they saw that God's counsel did not harmonize with their wicked and foolish desire, they rose up against the Prophet. But he now more clearly condemns their obstinacy in not obeying God; and it is said emphatically, that they did not obey the voice of God, because they denied that God had spoken. Though then they sought to evade, Jeremiah on the other hand declares, that he was a true interpreter of God's will, that he had announced nothing but what had come from God. He then brings them all in as guilty, the leaders and the whole people, that no man might think it strange that innocent men, willing to submit to God, were driven into Egypt. Hence the Prophet shews here that they were all implicated in the same sin, since the leaders alone did not resist the oracle, but also the whole people. It now follows,

5. But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah;

6. *Even* men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah.

7. So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord. Thus came they *even* to Tahpanhes.

5. Et assumpsit Joannes filius Kareah et cuncti duces copiarum reliquias Jehudah, quæ reversæ fuerant e cunctis gentibus, ad quas illuc expulsæ fuerant (*sed abundat* illuc) ad habitandum in terra Jehudah;

6. Nempe viros et mulieres (*assumpsit tam viros quam mulieres,*) et pueritiam et filias Regis, et omnem animam, quam reliquerat Nabuzardan, princeps interfectorum, apud Godoliam filium Achikam, filii Saphan, et apud Jeremiam Prophetam, et apud Baruch filium Neriæ:

7. Et venerunt in terram Ægypti, quia non obedierunt voci Jehovæ, et venerunt usque ad Taphnees.

The Prophet now gives us a narrative of what he had briefly touched upon. He then says that John and the rest

of the leaders took the remnant of the people, who were there alive, and those who had returned from various countries; for many had become fugitives among the Moabites and the Idumeans, when they saw the city surrounded by the forces of King Nebuchadnezzar. Then they fled here and there, as it usually happens, and waited for the issue of the war. But after Nebuchadnezzar had departed, and a permission had been given to Gedaliah to collect what remained of the people and to place them in cities and towns, many returned into the land, now desolate; for they had dwelt with aliens, and had been miserably treated. As then they could not settle out of their own land nor find any quiet habitation, they returned, as it is usual with men reduced to want, who have no settled dwelling. They then returned, that they might live under the protection of Gedaliah.

Now the Prophet says, that they were taken by *John* and brought into *Egypt*. This then was the way in which they shewed their obstinacy. We hence see how audacious must these leaders have been, that they hesitated not to go into Egypt, though it was shewn to be a fatal step. There was not indeed at that time any army of Nebuchadnezzar in Judea, though his vengeance might have been dreaded. And then, having fled to Egypt, they might have been ill-treated there, and not hospitably received. But we hence perceive, that when men once shake off the yoke of God, they are hurried on by a diabolical madness, so that there is nothing unsurmountable to them. Had they been asked whether they acted rightly, they might have raised a thousand arguments as excuses; but when they followed their own propensity, they in a manner, so to speak, leaped over the clouds. Impiety then is always full of rashness and audacity. But as we see that the ungodly thus rush headlong into ruin, even when God pronounces a curse on their counsels and proceedings, let us learn to take encouragement ever to obey God; for he promises a joyful and blessed issue at all times when we follow the ways pointed out by him. *John* then and *the other leaders of the forces took the remnant of the people.*

And then he shews how little those exiles consulted

their own good, who had returned to dwell in the land of Judea; for they might have still rested in safety among the nations who had in kindness received them; but in Egypt God soon executed his judgments on the natives as well as on strangers. But they deserved such a reward, because they preferred to obey the command of the perverse and obstinate, rather than to obey the voice of God speaking by his Prophet.

The Prophet also mentions particularly who they were; they were *men and women and children.* Some render the last word "puberty," which I do not approve, since Scripture speaks thus of children. Then John and his associates took *childhood,* or children; and he adds, *the daughters of the king.* We have before inquired who these daughters of the king were: the probability is that they were his daughters by his concubines; and that they had been put in some safe place, so that if any great evil happened, they might not fall into the hands of enemies. Then these daughters of the king had returned with the other exiles, but were afterwards carried into Egypt.

At last he adds, *all the souls which* had been left by *Nebuzaradan with Gedaliah, with Jeremiah, and with Baruch.* This had not been expressed elsewhere, that is, that Jeremiah and Baruch were joined with Gedaliah as rulers over the remnant of the people. But it was not the design of Jeremiah to relate everything that then took place. Now then, when an occasion occurred, he says that he and also Baruch were made governors in connection with Gedaliah. He then adds, that they all *came into Egypt,* or that they entered into Egypt. For the word first used, ויבאו, *vaibau,* may be rendered, "and they entered into Egypt;" and then he adds, ויבאו עד־תחפנחס, *vaibau od-tachephnuches,* "and they entered (or penetrated) as far as Tachephnuches." It was formerly one of the chief cities of Egypt; but its name has perished together with is wealth; for in heathen writers hardly the name of this city is found. They indeed mention the city Taphnim, but speak not of Taphnees. It is then probable, as changes take place in a country, that this city became by degrees forsaken, so as to become obscure and

mean, and that other cities were built which exceeded it in wealth. He then says that they *came to Taphnees.* It now follows,—

8. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying,

9. Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick-kiln, which *is* at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah;

10. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them.

8. Et fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam in Taphnees, dicendo,

9. Sume in manu tua (accipe in manu tua) lapides grandes (*vel,* magnas,) et absconde eos in luto (*vel,* cæmento,) in fornace laterum, (*vel,* lacuna, *unde sumitur materia ad formandos lapides,*) qui locus (*vel,* quæ fornax) est in porta domus Pharaonis in Taphnees, in oculis hominum Judæorum;

10. Et dices ad eos, Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Ecce ego mitto (mittam,) et assumam Nabuchadnezer regem Babylonis, servum meum, et ponam solium ejus super lapides istos, quos abscondi, et extendet tentorium suum super ipsos.

This passage shews that the Prophet was by force drawn away with others, so that he became an exile in Egypt contrary to his own wishes; for he did not go there of his own accord, inasmuch as we have seen how strictly he forbade them all to go down to Egypt. He was, however, compelled to go there, as though he had been bound with chains. He did not then go there designedly, nor did he through despair follow those miserable men; for he would have preferred to die a hundred times through famine and want in the land of Judah rather than to have sought in this way the lengthening of his life. It then appears that he was driven there as it were by enemies.

But as nothing happens except through God's purpose, so from this prophecy it appears that God ordered the going down of his servant, and that he was not so subjected to the will of the wicked, but that he was always guided by the hidden influence of God; for it was God's will to have his herald even in the midst of Egypt, that he might declare to the Jews what was to be. His doctrine, indeed, was not of any benefit to them; but it was God's purpose to drive them as it were into madness, inasmuch as their wickedn

was wholly irreclaimable; for it is a harder thing for the wicked to hear God's voice when he threatens vengeance, than to feel his hand. When, therefore, the unbelieving avoid the word of God, they are still constrained, willing or unwilling, to hear what they wilfully reject, even that God will be their judge. The Prophet then was sent, according to the hidden purpose of God, into Egypt, that he might there perform his wonted vocation and proceed in the discharge of his office, and there carry on his prophetic work.

But this prophecy was greatly disliked; for as the Jews had been already much exasperated, this threatening was still more calculated to kindle up their fury; and Jeremiah did also create danger to himself from the Egyptians, for he not only threatened the Jews, but also the whole kingdom of Egypt. We hence perceive how invincible was his courage, for he marched through certain deaths, and was yet terrified by no dangers, but performed the office entrusted to him by God. Some think that he was on this account stoned by the Jews; but this is not probable, nay, it may be gathered from other places that he died a natural death. However this may have been, his perseverance and firmness were wonderful, for he struggled to the end, and without weariness, with those wild beasts, whose savageness he had more than enough experienced.

Let us now see what this prophecy is: *The word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah;* and the sum of it is, that the Prophet was bidden not only to proclaim the vengeance of God, but also to confirm it by a visible symbol, as it was necessary to arouse unbelieving men. For so great was their stupidity, that unless God roused all their senses, they would have never attended; they were deaf. Then the Lord set before their eyes what they were unwilling and refused to hear. For this reason the Prophet was bidden to add an outward sign to his prophecy; according to what we have stated in other places, signs were often connected with the doctrine on account of the tardiness, or rather the stupidity of men.

He was then commanded to take *great stones*, and to *hide* them in *the clay*, or cement, *in a brick-kiln*, that is, in a kiln where bricks were burnt, or in a place where they were

usually made, or where materials were taken to form them. And this place was not far from the palace of the king in the city of Taphnees, as the Prophet expressly declares; nay, he says that it was nigh the gate. As, then, this place was near the palace, the Prophet was bidden to hide there the stones, and in the sight of the Jews. This was the symbol. Now, it is shewn for what end God would have the stones to be fixed in the clay or cement; for if the stones were only rolled there with great labour by the Prophet, there would have been no instruction; and all signs we know are unmeaning and without any importance without the word. It is God's word, then, that in a manner gives life to signs, and applies them for the benefit and instruction of men. Therefore God's command is added, that he was to speak to the Jews: *Thou shalt say to them, Thus saith Jehovah.* He brings in God as the speaker, that the threatening might be more effectual, as it has been stated elsewhere; for if he had only related the words of God, he could not have thus arrested their attention, which was very tardy. This, then, is the reason why he speaks in the person of God himself.

Behold, I,—the particle demonstrative and the pronoun are both emphatical, הִנֵּנִי, *enni; Behold, I send,* he says, *to bring Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne on these stones.* We now understand the drift of the whole, even that these stones were thrown into the cement, that God might build up a throne for Nebuchadnezzar. The time, indeed, for building the throne had not yet come; but God's purpose was to lay the foundations, so that they might be hid until the time arrived. The Prophet, then, built a throne for Nebuchadnezzar, when he cast these stones into the place of the brick-kiln.

We must now examine each particular in order. God says that he would send to bring Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. This mission must not be understood otherwise than that of the secret providence of God; for he had no attendants by whom he might send for Nebuchadnezzar, but he called him, as it were, by his nod only. Moreover, this mode of speaking is borrowed, taken from men, who, when

they wish anything to be done, intimate what their object is; and then, when they give orders, they issue their commands. This is what earthly kings do, because they can by a nod only accomplish whatever comes to their minds. But God, who needs no external aids, is said to send when he executes his own purpose, and that by his incomprehensible power. And further, God intimates that when Nebuchadnezzar came, it would by no means be by chance, but to take vengeance on the perverse Jews, who hoped for a safe retirement in Egypt, when yet God promised them a quiet habitation in the land of Judah, had they remained there. Then God declares that he would be the leader of that march when Nebuchadnezzar came into Egypt, as though he had said that the war would be carried on under his banner. Nebuchadnezzar did not from design render obedience to God; for ambition and pride led him to Egypt when he came, and for this reason, because the Egyptians had so often provoked him, so that without dishonour to himself he could no longer defer vengeance. It was, then, for this reason he came, if we look to his object. But God declares that he overruled the king as well as all the Babylonians, so that he would arm them when he pleased, and bring them into Egypt, and by their means carry on war with the Egyptians.

For the same reason he calls him *his servant;* not that Nebuchadnezzar was worthy of so honourable a name, for he had nothing less, as we have said, than a design to serve God; but he is called God's servant, because he executed what God himself had decreed: for the Scripture sometimes calls even the devils the servants of God; but in strict language, angels and the faithful are alone his servants. Kings and prophets are also, for a special reason, called God's servants, to whom is committed the authority to rule or to teach. But in this place, as in many other places, the Scripture calls those God's servants whom he employs to effect his purpose, even when they themselves have no such design. But the Prophet, no doubt, had also in view the Jews, so that they might know that this war was approved by God; for Nebuchadnezzar would not have come except he had been brought there by God.

It then follows, *and I will set his throne.* This, also, is what God claims for himself, even the erecting of the throne of the King Nebuchadnezzar before the palace of the king of Egypt. The king of Babylon, doubtless, thought that the war was carried on through his own efforts and valour, and the courage of his soldiers; moreover, he sacrificed to his own fortune, as heathens use to do; and hence it is said in Isaiah of the Assyrian, "He will not think so." (Isa. x. 7.) But God designed this to be declared to the Jews before the time, that they might then know that the just reward of their obstinacy would be rendered to them, for they were to be taught, as we have said, for their good and benefit. But as they were already inexcusable, it was God's purpose to shame them more and more, so that they might know that a just punishment would be inflicted on them, because they had so obstinately rejected all the counsel of God.

I will, then, *erect his throne on the stones which I have hidden.* The Prophet here speaks irregularly, now in God's name, then in his own; but this was not done without reason. We have stated why he introduced God as the speaker, even that he might make the Jews more attentive; for he knew that all his threatenings would be derided except God's majesty was set before them: but now he connects himself with God, as though he had said that he had nothing apart from God. This is the reason why he said, *upon the stones which I have hid.* God had not hidden the stones, but the Prophet speaks, nevertheless, in the person of God. But, as I have already said, this connection shews that the prophetic word is so connected with the hand and power of God, that when the Prophet speaks, it ought to be counted the same, as though God openly thundered from heaven. And this mode of speaking ought to be carefully noticed, so that we may learn reverently to receive whatever faithful teachers declare in his name, while performing the duties of their office; for they are not to be looked upon as men, for otherwise whatever proceeds from them may be disregarded; but we ought to receive the doctrine proclaimed by their mouth as though God himself had descended from heaven to speak to us.

He afterwards adds, *and he shall extend* his tabernacle or his tent; for שפריר, *shepherir*, is taken from a word which means beauty, and properly means here a royal tent.[1] The Hebrews do not give this name to the tents of shepherds, but only to those tents which excel in magnificence and splendour, according to what we say in French, *Le pavillon du Roy.* It now follows,—

11. And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, *and deliver* such *as are* for death, to death; and such *as are* for captivity, to captivity; and such *as are* for the sword, to the sword.

11. Et veniet et percutiet terram Ægypti; qui ad mortem, ad mortem; et qui ad exilium, ad exilium; et qui ad gladium, ad gladium.

He confirms the former verse by what he says here and in the two following verses to the end of the chapter. As Egypt had cities well fortified and deemed impregnable, the Jews never thought that the Chaldeans could so easily penetrate into them. For, first, that country is situated in a plain; and, secondly, in the midst of lakes: and it is in part surrounded by the Nile and the Red Sea. As, then, Egypt was on every side so well fortified, they thought that there would be there a quiet nest for them. But God declares that King Nebuchadnezzar would become the conqueror of the whole land; and he removes all objections when he says,—

Those for death, to death; those for captivity, to captivity; those for the sword, to the sword; as though he had said, "Were Egypt ever so populous, yet the immense multitude of men will avail nothing, for they shall be conquered by their enemy; for some shall perish by the sword, and some by various kinds of death, and some shall be driven into exile; and Egypt shall be destroyed, as though no one stood up in its defence." We hence see that this was added, that the Prophet might shake off the false confidence of the Jews. To the same purpose are the two following verses.

12. And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he

12. Et accendam ignem in ædibus deorum Ægypti; et comburet

[1] It is rendered by the *Sept.* and *Syr.*, "arms;" by the *Vulg.*, "throne;" by the *Targ.*, "tent." Strange that there should be such a difference. It was something to be stretched out or extended, for such is the meaning of the verb; and it was something beautiful, for so the word means. It was probably a canopy erected over the throne, which was to be set on the stones.—*Ed.*

shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace.

eas (*vel*, ipsos deos) et captivos abducet et involvet terram Ægypti, quemadmodum involvere solet pastor vestem suam; et egredietur illinc in pace.

He goes on with the same subject; and he ascribes to God the kindling of the fire, that the Jews might know that the war would be conducted by a divine power, and that Nebuchadnezzar would not come except through God's providence. For though, as it has been said, he had his own reasons, yet God, by his wonderful power, led him, as it were, by the hand, to punish the Egyptians. They, indeed, deserved such a destruction, because they had by their flatteries deceived the miserable Jews, and had corrupted them. Besides, their allurements had been very ruinous, for through them the aid of God had been despised, and all the prophecies rejected. As then they had been the authors of all kinds of evils to the Jews, we hence infer that they deserved a dreadful vengeance; and this had been in due time made known to the Jews, but they did not believe it. Then the Prophet fully confirms what had been declared in his former prophecies.

I will kindle a fire, says God, *in the temples of the gods of Egypt.* And he mentions temples, that the Jews might understand that no part of the land would be safe or secure from destruction: for it often happens that when the cruelty of enemies rages greatly, the temples are spared; for religion commands respect, and honour has been given also to idols, so that their temples have often remained untouched, when enemies have wholly overthrown all other things. But it is probable, that the Chaldeans had so great a presumption and pride, that they wished to destroy all the temples, that there might be no religion anywhere except among themselves. And some also among the Persians had this barbarity, as Xerxes, who, when he entered into Greece, and some parts of Asia, burnt and destroyed all the temples, and said also in derision, that all the gods in Greece were taken captive, and were shut up in the temples, and that he accomplished everything through his own valour. There is, indeed, no doubt but that Xerxes thus arogantly triumphed over the gods of the Greeks; and such

was probably the insolence displayed by the Chaldeans. However this may have been, yet God shews, that no place in Egypt would be held sacred: for the Chaldeans would even burn their temples. But at the same time he meant to cast a reproach on the obstinacy of the Jews, because they went down to Egypt, whose safety depended on idols. God then shews that they were more than blind, and wholly beside themselves, as though they were brute animals, when they hoped for a quiet port in Egypt, which was under the protection of false gods. God then says, that he would *kindle a fire* by which the temples of the gods of Egypt would be burned.

And he adds, *and it* or *he will burn them.* This may be applied to the fire; but he, no doubt, speaks of the King Nebuchadnezzar, for it immediately follows, *and shall carry them captives,* and *shall roll up the land of Egypt, as a shepherd his garment.* The verb properly means to cover, but it means also sometimes to gather up. It may be rendered here to roll up, as we say in French, *trousser et entortiller.* He intimates, that Nebuchadnezzar would, according to his own will, so rule in Egypt, that he would heap together all the wealth of the whole land: and as a shepherd, when he leads his flock to another place, collects his utensils, and rolls up his garments, or folds himself in them; so Nebuchadnezzar, says the Prophet, would gather together, or *roll up the whole land of Egypt.* He mentions *land,* as signifying the wealth which Nebuchadnezzar accumulated. At length he adds, *and thence shall he depart in peace.* He shews that the conquest would be complete, for the Egyptians would not dare to mutter, nor dare to follow their enemy on his departure; for he would be as though he were in a peaceable place, and in his own kingdom.[1]

[1] The first verb is rendered in the third person, by the *Sept.*, the *Vulg.*, and the *Syr.*, "He will kindle;" but in the first by the *Targ.*, "I will kindle." The third person runs better with the context; but if a causative sense be given to the verb, it will be equally the same, "And I will cause *him* to kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he will burn them, and carry them away captive; that is, he will burn the parts made of wood, and carry away the gold and the silver; "and he will put on the land of Egypt as the shepherd puts on his coat," that is, he will put on the spoils of the land with the same ease and facility as the shepherd puts on his coat, and carry them away, no one molesting or hindering him.—*Ed.*

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only once shewn to us the way in which we are to walk, but also daily exhortest us to continue in it, and ever to go forward towards the right mark,—O grant, that we may never turn aside, but suffer ourselves to be ruled by thy voice; and though temptations may drive us here and there, may we ever follow thy command, and so persevere in obedience to thee, that we may at length, by experience, find that it is our happiness to commit ourselves to thee, and to follow thee as our leader, until thou bringest us into that celestial kingdom, which has been prepared for us by thine only-begotten Son.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixtieth.

13. He shall break also the images of Beth-shemesh, that *is* in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.

13. Et conteret statuas Bethsemes (*vel*, Heliopolios) quæ est in terra Ægypti, et domos deorum Ægypti (*hoc est*, templa) exuret igni.

We stated yesterday why Jeremiah spoke especially of the temples of the gods, even that the Jews might understand that nothing would escape destruction: for even the cruelest enemies have usually withheld their hands from the temples of gods. If sanctity and religion would not preserve the temples, what then would become of private houses? He intimates, in short, that such would be the ruin of Egypt, that no part would escape.

But as Heliopolis was then in the greatest repute, he says, that the *statues* of all the gods in that city would be broken, for there the gods were especially worshipped. All heathen writers call it Heliopolis, to which the Hebrew word corresponds; for Bethsemes means the city of the sun; and Heliopolis means the same. As then this was the chief place where the gods of Egypt were found, the Prophet, in order to shew that the ruin of the whole land would be extreme, says that no temple would be there inviolate. So also Isaiah says, when speaking of the ruin of Egypt, "Behold, God will come into Egypt, and will cut down before him all the idols." (Isa. xix. 1.) He spoke of God's coming, because, under his guidance it was, that Nebuchadnez-

zar led there his army, as it has been stated. God did not, indeed, appear from heaven, but the army of Nebuchadnezzar was a living representation of God's power, when he punished the Egyptians. Now, he says, that when God came there armed, and carried on a warlike expedition, all the idols would be destroyed; for God would thus shew that the gods in whom the Egyptians trusted were false, that they were mere fictions, which could give no help when things came to an extremity. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XLIV.

1. The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying,

2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they *are* a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein;

3. Because of their wickedness which they have committed, to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, *and* to serve other gods, whom they knew not, *neither* they, ye, nor your fathers.

4. Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.

5. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods.

6. Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted *and* desolate, as at this day.

7. Therefore now thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of

1. Sermo qui fuit ad Jeremiam ad omnes Judæos qui habitabant in terra Ægypti, qui habitabant Magdali et in Taphneis et Memphi et in terra Pathros, dicendo,

2. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Vos vidistis omne malum quod adduxi super Jerusalem et super omnes urbes Jehudah; et ecce sunt (ipsæ) vastitas hodie, et nullus in illis habitans,

3. Propter malitiam quam perpetrarunt ad irritandum me ut proficiscerentur ad offerendum suffitum et ad serviendum diis alienis, quos non cognoverant ipsi, neque vos, neque patres vestri.

4. Et misi ad vos omnes servos meos, Prophetas, mane surgens et mittens, dicendo, Agedum ne feceritis rem abominationis hujus quam odi:

5. Et non audierunt et non inclinarunt aurem suam, ut reverterentur a malitia sua, et non offerrent suffitum diis alienis:

6. Et effusa est excandescentia mea et iracundia mea, et exarsit in urbibus Jehudah et in compitis Jerusalem, et fuerunt in vastitatem et in desolationem (*sicuti*) secundum diem hunc.

7. Et nunc dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Quare vos facitis

Israel, Wherefore commit ye *this* great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain.

malum hoc grande contra animas vestras ad excidendum vobis virum et mulierem et parvulum et lactantem e medio Jehudah, ut non faciatis residuas vobis reliquias.

Jeremiah had already prophesied against the Jews, who had taken refuge in Egypt, as though there would be for them in that rich and almost unassailable land a safe and quiet retreat. But he now speaks against them for another reason, and denounces on them something more grievous than before, even because they had not only gone into Egypt against God's will, but when they came there they polluted themselves with all kinds of superstition. God, no doubt, designed, in due time, to prevent this, when he forbade them to go into Egypt; for he knew how prone they were to idolatry, and to false and adulterous modes of worship. He was therefore unwilling that they should dwell in that land, where they might learn to pervert his worship. And this had happened, as it appears from the present prophecy. As then they had cast aside every shame, and given themselves up to the superstitions of the heathens, the Prophet again testified, that God would take vengeance on them. But we shall see that he had to do with refractory men; for without shewing any respect for him, they attacked him with impetuous fury. The sum of what is said then is, that the Jews who dwelt in Egypt were unworthy of any pardon, because they had, as it were, designedly rejected the favour of God, and their obstinacy had become altogether hopeless. We shall now consider the words:

A word is said to have been *given to Jeremiah to all the Jews.* But God spoke to Jeremiah not in the same way as to the Jews; for he committed to him the words which he commanded him to deliver to others. Then the word was directly given to Jeremiah only; but as Jeremiah was God's interpreter to the people, the word is said to be given in common to all, which yet at first, as it has been stated, was committed to Jeremiah alone. For he did not favour the Jews with such an honour as to speak to them, but he sent the Prophet as his messenger. He said then *to the Jews who dwelt in Egypt,* and afterwards he mentions certain

places, first *Migdol*, then *Tahpanhes*, and thirdly, *Noph*. The first name some have rendered Magdal. That city was not so much known at the time when Egypt flourished, but it has been mentioned by heathen writers. Of Tahpanhes we spoke yesterday. Noph has been called Memphis; and it is generally agreed that what the Hebrews called Noph was that noble and celebrated city Memphis, which, as they suppose at this day, is called Cairo, *Le Caire*. He lastly mentions the *country of Pathros*, which is supposed by some to have been near Pelusia. But on such a matter as this I bestow no great labour; for even heathen writers have regarded this as an obscure country, of no importance. Pathros is elsewhere mentioned as a city, and some think it to have been Petra of Arabia. But the Prophet no doubt refers here to the country in which Memphis and other cities were situated, in which the Jews dwelt.

But he says these things for this reason, because a question might have been raised, "As the Jews dwelt in Egypt, so large was the land, that the Prophet could not have announced the commands of God to all. This, then, was the reason why he intimates that they were not dispersed everywhere throughout Egypt, from one end to the other, but that they were in one part only, and that they were so collected that his word might come to all. This, then, was the reason why he mentioned the places where the Jews sojourned.

He now begins with reproof, because they were so stupid as not to remember the vengeance which God had executed on themselves and on the whole nation. They had been left alive for this end, that they might acknowledge God's judgment, and thus return to a right mind. Here, then, the Prophet upbraids them with their insensibility, that they had profited nothing under the scourges of God. They commonly say that fools, when they are beaten, become wise. As then the Jews had not repented, after having been so grievously chastised, it was a proof of extreme perverseness; for if the remnant had a grain of a sound mind, they would have been humbled at least by the final destruction of their nation, and when the city and the temple were

demolished. Since then they followed the same wicked courses, for which God had inflicted so grievous a punishment, it was evident that they were wholly irreclaimable and destitute of reason and judgment. This is the import of all the words of the Prophet which we have read.

He says first, *Ye have seen what great evils I brought* on you and the land. "Then ye know that you have justly suffered all the evils which have happened to you; for ye have not sinned through want of knowledge, but when I had sedulously warned you by my Prophets, ye continued ever obstinate; ye have therefore fully deserved such punishments. Now when God spared you, and wished that a small number should remain, to preserve as it were a seed, how is it that these evils which are still as it were before your eyes, are not remembered by you?" We now then understand the design of the Prophet.

But it may be well to examine every part; *Ye have seen*, he says, *all the evil which I have brought* (evil here means calamity) *on Jerusalem, and on all the cities of Judah;* and, behold, they are now *a waste, and no one dwells there.* There is here an emphatical comparison between Jerusalem and Memphis, between the cities of Judah and Heliopolis and the whole country of Pathros. If then God had not spared the holy city which he had chosen, if he had not spared the cities of Judah which were under his protection, how foolish it was for the Jews to think that they would be safe in the cities of Egypt? By what privilege could these be secure, since the cities of Judah had been reduced to a waste? We now then perceive why the Prophet mentioned Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; it was, that he might expose the stupidity of the Jews, because they thought themselves safe in Egypt, a land which God had ever held in abomination.

He afterwards adds, *For the evil which they did to provoke me.* He refers to the sins by which the Jews had provoked the wrath of God; for the people whom Jeremiah addressed had relapsed into those superstitions which had been the cause of their ruin. Had the Prophet spoken generally and said, that it was strange that the Jews had forgotten the punishment which had been inflicted by God on the whole

nation, his doctrine would not have been so impressive. But when he now points out as by the finger how they had procured for themselves such calamities, he presses and urges them more forcibly to acknowledge their madness, because they thus continually provoked God, and sinned not through ignorance, but offended him by the same sins for which yet they had suffered punishment so grievous and dreadful. This is the reason why the Prophet says, *For the evil which they did to provoke me*, even *to go*, he says, *to offer incense and to serve alien gods*. To *go* here intimates the care and diligence they exercised in false worship. God had shewn to the Jews a certain way in his Law which they ought to have followed: had they then continued in the doctrine of the Law, they would have kept in the right way, and gone forward to the right end. But they are said to *go*, because they disregarded the Law and went here and there, as those who wander at random, and know not where they are going. There is then to be understood a contrast between *going* and remaining under the teaching of the Law. To *go*, in short, is to weary one's self by an erratic course, when the word of God is neglected, and the way which it points out is forsaken. This is one thing.

Then he adds, *to offer incense and to serve alien gods*. Incense here is mentioned as a particular thing, then that which is general is added; for incense, as it is well known, was an evidence of worship. Then the Prophet under one thing condemns the idolatry of his own nation. But at length he shews that they were given to other abominations, that they had devoted themselves to the false worship of alien gods.

This passage, and those which are like it, are entitled to particular notice; for we hence learn that men depart from God and alienate themselves from the true worship of him, whenever they mingle with it something of their own, and dream of this and that according to their own will, the very thing intended, as we have said, by *going* as used by the Prophet. As soon, then, as men devise for themselves some new modes of worship, it is the same thing as though they turned backward or wilfully wandered, for they keep not in the right and legitimate way. We also learn from the second

clause that idolaters in vain adduce pretences to excuse themselves. For if they transfer to another what peculiarly belongs to God, and what he claims for himself, it is more than a sufficient proof of idolatry; and incense, as I have said, was a symbol of divine worship. As then they offered incense to their idols, they robbed the true God of his own honour, and chose new gods, and adorned them with the rights of the only true God.

In vain, then, and foolishly do the Papists at this day seek evasions when we object to them and say, that gross idolatries prevail among them: "Ho! it is not our intention to transfer the worship which peculiarly belongs to the only true God to saints, to images; but we apply all this to God." Since they burn incense to saints, images, and pictures, since they offer incense even to the dead, there is surely no further need of disputing the point; and when they try to evade whatever they can bring forward, it is confuted by this one expression of the Prophet, for when he speaks of incense, he condemns the Jews for their idolatry.

But as I have said, he speaks afterwards generally, and says, *and to serve alien gods.* Then it follows, *whom they knew not, neither ye nor your fathers.* Here the Prophet amplifies the sin of his own nation, because they had devoted their attention to unknown gods. There is here again a contrast to be understood, that is, between God, who had revealed himself by his Law, by his Prophets, by so many miracles and blessings, and the fictitious gods, who had, without thought and without judgment, been invented and contrived by the Jews. Now, it was an evidence of a base and an intolerable ingratitude, that the Jews should have forsaken the true God after he had made himself known to them. For had the Law never been given, had God suffered them, as other nations, to be entangled in their own errors, their offence would have been lighter. But God had made himself to be so familiarly known to them, that he was pleased to give them his Law, to be a certain rule of religion; he had also exercised his miraculous powers among them. As, then, the knowledge of the true God had been made so remarkably clear to them, how great and how base was their

ingratitude to reject him and to depart from him, in order to run after idols! when they contrived for themselves vain gods and nothing but fictions! Had any one inquired what sort of god was Baal, or what were their Baalim, they would have said, that they had Baalim as their patrons, who obtained favour for them with the supreme God. But whence had they derived their vain notion? It was nothing but superstition founded on no reason.

This ought to be carefully observed; for at this day were any one to ask the Papists by what right they have devised for themselves so various and so many modes of worship: devotion alone they say will suffice, or a good intention. Let us then know that religion, separated from knowledge, is nothing but the sport and delusion of Satan. It is hence necessary that men should with certainty know what god they worship. And Christ thus distinguishes the true worship of God from that of vain idols, "We know," he says, speaking of the Jews, "whom we worship." (John iv. 22.) He then says that the Jews knew, even those who worshipped God according to what the Law prescribes,—he says that they knew whom they worshipped. He then condemns all good intentions in which the superstitious delight themselves, for they know not whom they worship. And I have said that religion ought not to be separated from knowledge; but I call that knowledge, not what is innate in man, or what is by diligence acquired, but that which is delivered to us by the Law and the Prophets.

We now, then, understand why the Prophet says that the Jews devoted themselves to alien gods, whom *they had not known*, nor their fathers.

Now follows a circumstance by which their impiety was still further enhanced, that God had *sent* them Prophets who stretched forth their hands to them to draw them from their errors. For had they never been warned, their condemnation would have been just; for God had once shewn to them by his Law what was right. The teaching, then, of the Law ought to have been sufficient for all ages. But when God had never ceased to send Prophets, one after another, it was a sign of hopeless obstinacy to reject so many and so con-

stant warnings. God then added this circumstance that it might appear that the Jews were wholly inexcusable, and worthy of a hundred and of a thousand deaths, because they had so perversely despised all the means of salvation.

But God says, that he had *sent to them all his servants.* What is universal has its own peculiar importance; for if one or two Prophets had been sent, the Jews would have been proved guilty; for the law does not require more than two or three witnesses to condemn those who have done wrong. (Deut. xvii. 6.) But God shews here that there had been a vast number of those, through whom, had they been believed, the Jews might have been preserved in safety. They might, then, have been proved guilty, not only by three or four witnesses, but even by a great number; for the Prophets had continually succeeded one another. And thus had been fulfilled what God had promised in the Law, "A Prophet will I raise up from the midst of thy brethren, him shalt thou hear; and every one who will not hear that Prophet shall be cut off from his people." (Deut. xviii. 18, 19.) For God shews in his proclaimed Law, that this would be one of his chief blessings, ever to keep the Jews in the knowledge of their duty, by never leaving them destitute of Prophets and faithful teachers. Here then he shews that he had ever really performed what he had promised by Moses; for he does not say that he had only sent a few, but, as I have said, that there had been a copious abundance; for in every age there were several Prophets, and some, when it became necessary, succeeded others. But what had been the fruit? He afterwards complains that all the Prophets had been rejected.

But to render their sin still more heinous, he says, *rising up early and sending.* Of this kind of speaking an explanation has been elsewhere given. (Chap. vii. 13; xi. 7.) It is a metaphorical language; for God rises not nor does he change places; but here he applies to himself what peculiarly belongs to men. For he who is attentive to business, does not wait till the sun rises, but anticipates the morning dawn. So also the Prophet says, that God had been vigilant, for he had been solicitous concerning the wellbeing of the people.

We further learn from this mode of speaking how invaluable is the benefit which God bestows when he raises up honest and faithful teachers; for it is the same as when the head of a family rises early from his bed, calls up his children, and takes care of them. Let us, then, know that teaching, when it is communicated to us, is an evidence of God's paternal solicitude, because he would not have us to perish, but comes down to us and sees what is needful, as though he were present with us, and as a father towards his children, he takes care of us and of our affairs. This is the meaning.

He now adds the substance of his message, *Do not the thing of this abomination which I hate.* God intimates, in short, that it had not been through him that the Jews did not return from their errors to the right way, because he had stretched forth his hand to them, and had, as it were, suppliantly requested them to provide better for themselves, and not knowingly and wilfully to seek their own destruction, having acted as though he were a husband, who, being anxious to preserve the fidelity of his wife, might thus say to her,—"Behold, thou knowest that I cannot endure unchasteness; beware, then, lest thou shouldest prostitute thyself to adulterers." So God shews here that he had testified by all his servants, that all kinds of idolatry were displeasing to him, in order that the Jews might keep themselves from idolatry.

And he adds, *But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to alien gods.* Here God charges the Jews with irreclaimable obstinacy, for the teaching of the Law did not retain them in obedience, nor did they attend to it, though often and at different times warned and admonished by the Prophets. And their perverseness he still more clearly sets forth by the second clause, when he says that they did *not incline their ear.* Had he said, "They have not hearkened," it would have been quite sufficient; but when he adds, "They have not inclined their ear," he expresses, as I have said, something worse than contempt, even that they designedly rejected the teaching of the Prophets, that they disdained to hear the Prophets or to listen to their admonitions, but became willingly deaf, nay, closed up their ears, as rebels

do, who are said elsewhere to harden their heart. We now then understand the import of this verse.

Now he adds, *On this account has my wrath and my fury been poured forth, and has burned through the cities of Judah, and through the streets of Jerusalem; and this day they are a waste and a desolation.* The word שִׁמָּמָה, *shimme*, sometimes means amazement, as it has been before stated; but when it is connected with חָרְבָה, *cherebe*, as here, it means desolation. *As at this day;* a dreadful waste was then at that time apparent. He again refers to this truth, that the Jews ought to have been so touched by that remarkable and memorable instance of God's displeasure, as not to abandon themselves afterwards to new idolatries; they ought to have remembered so recent an example of punishment. As, then, they still persevered in their hardness, it was an evidence of extreme impiety. The Prophet says that the perverseness of the Jews had not been unpunished, for God's wrath had been poured forth against the cities of Judah, nay, against Jerusalem itself, the sanctuary of God, so that all things had been reduced to desolation. The Jews then ought, on the one hand, seriously to have considered how inexcusable had been their impiety in having so perversely despised God; and then they ought on the other hand, to have entertained fear and dread, since they saw that God had taken such vengeance on those who had despised his teaching and violated his worship.

He then adds, *Why then do ye now this great evil against your own souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, from* the midst of Judah, *that nothing may remain for you?* Here at length the passage is finished; for what we have hitherto read would have kept the reader in suspense, had not this been added. He then says, "Since the sin of your fathers ought to have been detested by you, and since God's judgment had been dreadful, and that punishment ought at this day to fill you with fear, *how is it,* that ye seek to bring on yourselves again the vengeance of God?" *Why then,* he says, *now,* &c. This *now* is emphatical, that is, after so many and so remarkable examples, after so many admonitions, after the most grievous punishment

inflicted on the obstinate. He says, *against your own souls;* and by this he touched them very sharply, reminding them that what they were doing would be to their ruin, as though he had said, that God would receive no loss from their wickedness, but that they would become the authors of their own destruction. He indeed intimates, as I have already said, that their impiety would not be without its punishment; but he shews at the same time that God could, if he thought proper, look down with indifference on their impieties; for he would remain perfect even if they were the worst. For when God is robbed by men of his just and legitimate worship, there is nothing taken away from his greatness; for he ever remains the same, and is neither advanced nor diminished through the will of men. Then the Prophet shews that the Jews were acting madly for their own ruin, when he says, that they did evil *against their own souls.*

And this he explains more fully by adding, *To cut off man and woman, child and suckling, from the midst of Judah.* He intimates that God still manifested his mercy, while there was any remnant. They might have remained in Judea, even in their own inheritance; and the country might have been inhabited till the time of seventy years had elapsed, which God had fixed for the exile. Now the Prophet shews that they fought as it were against the goodness of God, for they sought to extinguish their own name, so that nothing should remain of that people, to whom God had still left some seed, that they might not wholly perish.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou ceasest not continually to shew to us thy paternal love and care,—O grant, that we may not be so insensible as to turn a deaf ear to thy teaching and admonitions: but as thou watchest for our safety, may the constancy of our faith and obedience so respond to thee, that we may reverently receive thy word, suffer ourselves to be ruled by it, and follow the way which thou hast set before us, until we shall attain complete salvation, and enjoy that blessed inheritance which has been prepared for us in heaven by Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-First.

8. In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

8. Ad provocandum me in operibus manuum vestrarum, ad offerendum suffitum diis alienis in terra Ægypti, ad quam vos profecti estis, ut habitetis illic, ut excidium paretis vobis (*vel*, ut excidatis vos,) et ut sitis in maledictum et probrum inter cunctas gentes terræ.

I WAS in the last Lecture obliged to cut short the subject of the Prophet; for this verse depends on the foregoing, and is to be read together with it. The Prophet asked why the Jews willingly cut off from themselves every hope of safety, and were seeking their own ruin. He now expresses the matter more fully, even that they were provoking God's wrath by their superstitions. He then points out the cause of all evils,—the pollution of God's true worship by idolatries.

We here see that there is no end of sinning, when men despise God and allow themselves every license in doing evil: God was unwilling that the Jews should go to Egypt; for he had promised to cherish them as it were under his own wings; and thus he intended to shew them mercy, so that they might remain in safety, though in a country then miserable and desolate. But against his command they went into Egypt. When they came there, in order to gain favour with the Egyptians, they polluted themselves with vain superstitions. They might in the land of Judah have worshipped God in purity without any danger. Distrusting the favour of God they fled into Egypt; and the fear of men led them to deny their religion. We hence see how one evil proceeds from another; when the Jews coveted the favour of that heathen nation, they polluted themselves with many ungodly superstitions.

This is the sin which the Prophet now refers to,—*To provoke me*, he says, *by the works of your hands*. There is here to be understood a contrast between the works which God had commanded, and those which men had devised for themselves. The altar and the whole Temple were indeed

works done by the hand and art of men; but as God had commanded the altar to be made and the Temple to be built, the Temple was not, properly speaking, a human but a divine work, it having been commanded. But whatever men devise of themselves for the purpose of worshipping God, is what is called the work of their hands; for they invent things themselves, and follow only their own fancies; they attend not to what pleases God, but give license to their own imaginations, so that according to their own will they mingle together any sort of worship they please. This, then, is the reason, and according to this sense it is, that the Prophet says, that the Jews provoked God by *the works* of their *hands:* they corrupted his lawful worship and departed from true religion, when they attached themselves to heathen fictions and corruptions.

He then adds, *To offer incense to alien gods.* Under one particular thing, as it has been already said, the Prophet includes what is general, for the Jews did not only sin by offering incense, but also through various other superstitions. But by stating a part for the whole, he clearly intimates that they denied the true God when they worshipped idols. And then he adds, *in the land of Egypt, into which ye have entered, that ye might dwell there.* He takes away the excuse which they might have made, that they were constrained by fear, because they were unhappy exiles, and saw that their own religion would not be tolerated by that proud nation. The Prophet says that they had *come* into Egypt when God commanded them to remain in the land of Judah. That plea, then, could not have been admitted, that being terrified by danger they sought to please the Egyptians, for they brought themselves into that bondage, when they might have been at liberty in the land of Judah to worship God in purity. This is the reason why he says that they *came into Egypt* to sojourn there.

He at length adds, *to cut you off.* The construction is indeed different, but the meaning is clear. He intimates, in short, as he said in the last verse, that they willingly, and as it were designedly, rushed headlong into their own ruin. He then adds, *and ye shall be a curse and a reproach*

among all nations. By which words he means that their destruction would be memorable; and this was harder than if their memory was buried with their life. But the Prophet says that their death would be such an example as that they would be deemed execrable by all. In short, he declares that they would be exposed to all kinds of reproaches even after their death. It follows,—

9. Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?

10. They are not humbled *even* unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you, and before your fathers.

9. An obliti estis malorum patrum vestrorum, et malorum regum Jehudah, et malorum uxorum ejus, et malorum vestrorum, et malorum uxorum vestrarum, quæ fecerunt in terra Jehudah et in compitis Jerusalem?

10. Et non humiliati sunt (*vel,* attriti) usque ad hunc diem, et non timuerunt, et non ambulaverunt in lege mea et in statutis meis, quæ posueram coram facie vestra, et coram facie patrum vestrorum.

The Prophet now sets forth how extremely shameful was the insensibility of the Jews, in not acknowledging that God had most severely and grievously punished the superstitions to which they had previously been addicted. At the same time, if we regard the word used, he seems not to understand punishments by *evils,* but rather the wicked deeds by which they had provoked God. And this ought to be observed, for some interpreters give this rendering, "Have you forgotten your evils and those of your fathers;" that is, how severely God had afflicted you? But there is no doubt but that the Prophet means by רָעוֹת, *rout,* their sins, by which they had exposed themselves to God's judgment; for it immediately follows, *which they did,* or committed, *in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.* But though he means by this word the sins of the people, there is yet no doubt but that he includes also the punishments by which they ought to have known that the impiety in which they continued most obstinately had displeased God.

When therefore the Prophet says, *Have ye forgotten* your evils and those of your fathers? he takes it for granted that it was sufficiently known that God had taken vengeance on

them for their sins; for he does not address the Jews in their prosperity, but when they were fugitives from their own land and under the curse of heaven. As, then, they were evidently condemned by God, the Prophet justly asks them, "Have ye forgotten that you have been condemned for the sins of your fathers and those of your kings, even for those which they had committed?" This he asked, because it was a horrid stupidity, that though the city had been overthrown and the temple burnt, they did not yet leave off their superstitions, especially when so singular a vengeance of God ought to have retained their posterity in fear and obedience even for ten ages. Thus we see that punishment is linked with sins.

He says, *of the kings of Judah and of their wives.* The relative is singular, "his wives;" but no doubt it refers to the people. Some read, "of every one of them;" but there is no need, it being a singular number, referring to a collective noun, Judah. He afterwards adds, *which they did.* This ought not to be confined to the women, (nor is it suitable,) but it refers to all the Jews as well as to kings of Judah, and also to the women,—*which* then *they did in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.*

When he mentions *the streets of Jerusalem,* he exaggerates their wickedness. For we know that city to have been as it were the earthly sanctuary of God. It was then a most disgraceful impiety to pollute that place which God had consecrated for himself. The whole land of Judah was indeed under his authority and power, but he had favoured the city, and especially Mount Sion, with singular privileges. Then the Prophet amplifies the greatness of their sin, when he says that Jerusalem had been polluted by their superstitions.

He afterwards mentions how great had been the perverseness of that people, *They are not humbled,* he says, *to this day,* though they had been most severely smitten by the rods of God. Even fools, when smitten, become wise, as the old proverb says. As the Jews then had been so grievously chastised by God's hand, and had experienced extreme rigour, ought they not to have considered what they had deserved? But the Prophet shews that their wickedness was

past remedy, for though broken down they were not yet humbled, like those who are of a perverse disposition, who could not be reformed were they broken down a hundred times. Then the Prophet upbraids the Jews with their obstinacy, for not even the greatest calamity had brought them to obedience.

They were not then humbled to that day, nor did they *fear*. Fear ought also to be referred here to the calamities which they had experienced, for God had sufficiently shewn that he had been grievously offended with their impiety. As then God's dreadful judgment had been made conspicuous to all, the Prophet here condemns their dulness, because they had not been brought back to a sound mind so as to fear God. He now adds another instance of obstinacy, that they had not *walked* in the Law of God and in his commandments. Then he shews that their obstinacy was twofold, that they had profited nothing by his teaching, and that they had disregarded his punishments. The Law itself was to them a rule according to which they were to worship God, nor ought they to have sought elsewhere what they were to do. As, then, they had in the Law a revelation as to true religion, it was an intolerable contempt to depart from it of their own accord, and to abandon themselves to all kinds of errors. But the Prophet shews that they had been extremely unteachable, because they had not only cast aside every regard for the Law, but they had also despised God's hand, and refused to be corrected by any punishments.

That he might shew still further that they had sinned through sheer wickedness, he says, They have not walked in my Law *nor in my statutes*. This second clause seems to be superfluous; but the Prophet here commends the clear teaching of the Law, as though God had said that he had not only shewn in a brief manner what was true and right, but that he had also by many statutes taught the Jews, so that they had no pretext for their ignorance. And he confirms the same thing in other words, when he says that he had *put* these statutes *before their face;* for by these words he intimates that there is nothing obscure in the Law, and

that the Jews therefore had not gone astray through want of knowledge; for men always extenuate by evasions their sins, when their impiety is condemned. The Prophet then says that the Jews were inexcusable, because the rule of true religion had been set before their eyes.

Now this passage testifies that the teaching of the Law is not doubtful, as some profane men say, who hold that Scripture may be turned anyhow like a nose of wax. But God declares that he had not spoken ambiguously. Since, then, the Prophet affirms that the Law had been set before the eyes of the Jews, that they might surely know the will of God, we ought to maintain at this day, that in the Gospel, clearly discovered to us by the coming of Christ, there is nothing obscure, but that the treasures of all knowledge have been made known to us, as far as it is necessary, so that they who now go astray in vain pretend that they do so because the will of God is hid from them; for in no other way can they err than by dissembling and wilfully closing their eyes, lest the brightness of the sun should reach them. Let us yet know that the more plainly God is made known to us, the more grievously we sin when we turn aside from his true worship and service; for he has omitted nothing in his word which is necessary in order to worship him acceptably. Since, then, we have before our eyes the rule of a godly life, except we follow it this reproof belongs to us, that God has set before our eyes his statutes. It now follows,—

11. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah.

12. And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, *and* fall in the land of Egypt; they shall *even* be consumed by the sword *and* by the famine: they shall die from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine; and they shall be an execration, *and* an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach.

11. Propterea sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Ecce ego pono faciem meam contra vos in malum et ad excidendum totum Jehudah;

12. Et tollam reliquias Jehudah, quæ posuerunt faciem suam ut venirent in terram Ægypti ad peregrinandum illic, et consumentur omnes in terra Ægypti, cadent in gladio, fame consumentur a parvo usque ad magnum; in gladio et fame morientur, et erunt in execrationem et stuporem et in maledictum et in opprobrium.

He again denounces punishment on the obstinate; nor is it a wonder that these threatenings were so often repeated, since he had to do with men so ferocious and refractory. The reason then why he denounced on them God's judgment, was because they boldly derided him; and it will become more evident from what follows how necessary was such vehemence.

And first, indeed, the Prophet briefly shews that all those would perish who had yet falsely imagined that they could not otherwise be safe than by fleeing into Egypt. Then Jeremiah here reproves and condemns their false and vain confidence. And then he explains the manner when he says, *I will take away all the remnant of Judah, who have set their face to come to Egypt*, &c. By these words and the following, God intimates that the Jews had in vain sought hiding-places in Egypt, because there he would inflict on them the punishment which they had deserved. He names the *sword* and the *famine;* the third kind he omits here, but he will mention it presently. Then he says that they were to perish, partly by the sword and partly by famine, and in order to speak more emphatically, he uses different words, *They shall be consumed by famine, they shall fall by the sword, they shall all be consumed*, and then he says, *from the least to the greatest.*

At length he adds, *And they shall be a curse.* We have said elsewhere that the word אלה, *ale*, sometimes means a curse, though it properly signifies an oath; and the reason is, because men in swearing often introduce a curse, "Let God curse me,"—"Let me perish." Then he says, that the Jews would become an example of a curse; for in making an oath this would be the common form, "Let God destroy me as he destroyed the Jews." He afterwards adds, *an astonishment*, because all would be horrified at the very sight of their calamity. It follows in the last place, *a curse and a reproach*, of which we have spoken before. Let us now proceed,—

13. For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.

13. Et visitabo super eos qui habitant in terra Ægypti, quemadmodum visitavi super Jerusalem, in gladio et fame et peste (*hic exprimitur tertia species.*)

He confirms in this verse what he had said in the last, that he would again take vengeance on impiety, as he had done previously. The Jews were before visited with a very grievous calamity, when inebriated with prosperity; but now, when God would have shaken from off them their torpor, the Prophet justly reminds them of the calamities which they had suffered: *As*, then, *I visited Jerusalem, so will I visit those who dwell in Egypt.* But the argument is also from the greater to the less; for if God had not spared the holy city, in which he had chosen a habitation, how should he spare Egypt? for Egypt was not worthy that God should regard it. We know that it was a profane and an accursed land. It was, then, the greatest madness for the Jews to hope to be safe in Egypt, when they could not have been so in the holy land, which was God's sanctuary, which was their heritage, which was even God's rest.

We now see the object of the Prophet; for he set before them the ruin of the city and of the land of Judah, that they might know that they could not escape the hand of God while they dwelt in Egypt contrary to his command, for God would be a severer judge to them there than he had been before in the land of Judah. It follows,—

14. So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape.

14. Et non erit qui evadat (qui sit residuus) inter reliquias Jehudah quæ venerunt ad peregrinandum hic (*nam erat Propheta in Ægypto*) nempe in terra Ægypti, et ad revertendum in terram Jehudah, ad quam ipsi elevant animam suam (*vel*, elevant animas suas) ad revertendum ut habitent illic, quia non revertentur nisi qui evaserint.

The Prophet seems to be inconsistent with himself; for at the beginning of the verse he says that there would be no residue, but at the end he adds an exception, that there would be few alive, who would flee, and, by some miracle, escape from death. Some take this view, that none of the ungodly despisers would remain, but that some would yet be preserved alive, even those who had been drawn there against their own will, such as Jeremiah, Baruch, and such as were like them. But this explanation may seem forced

at the first view; and yet if the Prophet is speaking of the Jews who had fled into Egypt, it is necessary so to take it; otherwise there would be a manifest inconsistency and contradiction. But we may also refer what he says at the end of the verse to the exiles in Babylon; for they who had concealed themselves in Egypt thought that it was all over with all others, because they had been led away into a distant country. As, then, a return to their country was closed up against them, they thought that they themselves would become the sole heirs of the land; for as Egypt was not far from the land of Judah, a return was easy, and also free, because they had made a treaty with the Egyptians; and further, they had gone to them as friends to partake of their hospitality. They, then, who dwelt in Egypt thought that the land of Judah would be their own.

But God says that none would return into that land except those who should escape, even those to whom permission to return would be given at the end of their captivity and exile. I take then the word פְּלֵטִים, *pelethim*, at the end of the verse, as referring to the remnant which God would at length gather, when liberty to return was granted to the Jews by the edict of Cyrus, at the end of the seventy years, which the Prophet had before mentioned. And this seems to me a simpler meaning, that is, that none would remain of that remnant which had gone down to Egypt, who *came*, as it is expressed, *to sojourn in the land of Egypt and to return to the land of Judah*, for this was their purpose.[1]

He then adds, *To which they lift up their souls to return there.* The Prophet here exposes the confidence by which the Jews still deceived themselves; for the lifting up of which he speaks, means to aspire or to hope, and denotes

[1] The easiest way to reconcile this seeming inconsistency is as follows: He threatens the fugitives to Egypt with the sword; this sword was that of Nebuchadnezzar, as he foretells in chap. xlvi. 15, &c. None would escape this sword except those who might have escaped in the meantime into the land of Judah. We see the same thing referred to in verse 28; and that verse may be thus rendered,—And those who shall escape the sword (*who* shall have returned from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah) shall be few in number; but all the remnant of Judah, who have gone to the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know the word, which shall stand, *what is* from me or from them.—*Ed.*

pride and presumption. So by saying that they *lifted up their souls*, he reproves them, because they were still inflated with a foolish hope, and persuaded themselves that a return would soon be open for them, as the land was without any possessors. As, then, they were cherishing themselves with such delusions, they were to know that they were never to return there, *They shall not return*, he says. And then follows an exception, *Except those who escape*, even those of whom the Jews in Egypt despaired, who thought that they did well, and had taken a prudent counsel, because they had for a time a quiet hiding-place in Egypt. It now follows,—

15. Then all the men which knew that their wives had burnt incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying,

16. *As for* the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.

15. Et responderunt Jeremiæ omnes viri, qui sciebant quod suffitum offerrent uxores ipsorum diis alienis, et omnes mulieres quæ adstabant, cœtus magnus, et totus populus qui habitabant in terra Ægypti, in Pathros, dicendo,

16. In sermone (*subaudiendum est* in, *vel*, quoad sermonem) quem locutus es ad nos in nomine Jehovæ, nos audivimus te.

Here is more fully seen the irreclaimable obstinacy of that nation; for Jeremiah had given them more than sufficient evidences of his integrity. They ought then to have been fully convinced that he was a true Prophet of God. Though they had disregarded him for forty years and more, he had yet given full proof of his legation when he had constantly, even to the last, prophesied of the destruction of the city and the Temple. They had, then, learnt by their own calamities that Jeremiah was an instrument of the Holy Spirit, and a true interpreter of God's will. And it hence appears how blind they were when they rejected all his admonitions, and counted his threatenings as fables. Thus, as in a mirror, the Holy Spirit of God sets before us how great the madness of men is when Satan once takes possession of their minds. But let us, at the same time, learn that this is the reward rendered to obstinacy, when God's Prophets are despised. It was, indeed, a monstrous and most disgraceful thing, when they dared so insolently to repudiate the holy Prophet, while, at the same time, they had been reduced to the greatest

extremities, and when spoiled of all things, had fled into Egypt, and lived there, as we have seen, in a servile and miserable condition. Inasmuch, then, as they were still ferocious and still arrogant towards God's Prophet, it hence appears that they were untameable.

He then says, that *all the men* to whom the impiety of their wives was known, *answered Jeremiah.* By these words the Prophet intimates that the beginning of idolatry was from the women. Things then had not as yet gone so far that all the men openly worshipped idols; but the women had taken this liberty, and the men readily indulged them. But why then did the Prophet before reprove them, as though they all made incense to idols? We doubtless learn from this passage, that they are not only guilty before God who openly do what is wicked, but also those who by connivance tolerate them; for the men ought to have interfered so as to restrain their wives from polluting themselves with ungodly superstitions; but this they patiently endured. Then their consent was the same as the deed, as we may rightly conclude from the words of the Prophet. He then says, that the men offered incense, not indeed openly and with their own hands, but that they knew of their wives, and that this impiety was done by the women with their consent. The rest I cannot now finish, I will proceed with it to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou wouldest prove our faith by many trials, we may constantly persevere in the pure worship of thy name, and in calling on thee in sincerity and truth, and that as we are surrounded and beset on every side by many pollutions, we may preserve ourselves pure and devoted to thee, both in body and soul, and thus proceed through the whole course of our life, so that at length we may appear unpolluted before thee, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-Second.

We began yesterday to explain what the Prophet says of the answer given him by the men and women. The sum of

it was, that they would not do what the Prophet commanded them, though he spoke to them in the name of God. They did not answer distinctly, that the word of God or his oracle to them was of no account, but impeached the fidelity of Jeremiah, as though he had alleged the name of God falsely.

But he says that the *men who knew that their wives burnt incense to alien gods, answered him;* and he afterwards adds, *and the women who stood by;* some read, "In the great assembly." But I have no doubt but that the Prophet means, that the answer was given in common by the men and by the women. He then says, that the women were at the same time present. He afterwards adds, *a great assembly.* What follows is an explanation, *the whole people who dwelt in the land of Egypt,* who dwelt in Pathros in the land of Egypt, and especially in that part. We have elsewhere spoken of Pathros.

We see, in short, that God's Prophet was rejected; and yet there is no doubt but the Jews pretended some religion, but they did not think that they were bound to obey the command of man. And whence was this contempt? even from nothing but perverseness; for however hypocrites may dissemble and say that they do not despise God and his word, and address their words to ministers, yet their impiety betrays them when, on the one hand, they pretend that they worship God, and on the other they repudiate those furnished with his commands whom he would have them to hear. But God will not and cannot have himself separated from his word. Let us now go on—

17. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for *then* had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

17. Quin potius (*vel*, quia, *est particula causalis, sed accipitur interdum adversative*) faciemus quicquid (*ad verbum*, omnem sermonem) qui egredietur ab ore nostro, ut suffitum offeramus reginæ (*vel*, machinæ) cœlorum, et libemus ei libamina, quemadmodum fecimus nos, et patres nostri, reges nostri et duces nostri in urbibus Jehudah, et in compitis Jerusalem, et saturati sumus panibus, et fuimus boni (*hoc est*, hilares, fœlices,) et malum non vidimus.

Here they shew more openly their obstinacy; for having said that they had no faith in Jeremiah, as he had

not been sent by God, they now add that they would indeed be the worshippers of God, but according to their own will. We have here discovered to us the fountain of all superstitions. This passage sufficiently proves whence these flow, and from what source proceed all the corruptions by which religion has been vitiated in all ages, even from the wilfulness and pride of men. While therefore men arrogate so much to themselves as to make a law respecting the worship of God, all things must necessarily go wrong. It was for this reason I said that this is the origin of all errors. How then is religion to remain pure? even by depending on God's mouth, by subjecting ourselves to his word, and by putting a bridle on ourselves, so as not to introduce anything except what he commands and approves. The right rule then as to the worship of God is, to adopt nothing but what he prescribes. On the other hand religion becomes vitiated and degenerates into superstition as soon as men seek to be legislators for themselves, when they say, *Doing we shall do every word that cometh forth from our mouth.*

This wilfulness is indeed what humble men will condemn if they only consult common sense; but it is an evil innate in all, to seek to worship God as it seems good to them. But Jeremiah here paints for us as it were on a tablet the beginning of all superstitions: men set up their own will and fancies in opposition to the commands of God.

He afterwards adds, *To offer incense to the frame-work of the heavens.* Interpreters differ as to the meaning of this clause. We have stated some things already in the seventh chapter; but as a great part of you were not then present, it is necessary to repeat what was then said. Some derive the last word but one from מלך, *melek*, which means to reign; and hence they give this rendering, "to the queen of the heavens;" and this is the explanation of *Jerome.* But others derive the word from לאך, *lak*, and render it "work;" and some more rashly, "ministry;" and others, "framework," or, fabric, (*machina.*) There are al th who deduce the word from הלך, *elek*, which is to k: a they think that all the stars or planets are inclu

term; and we indeed see that walking or motion is what belongs to all the stars. But if the word comes from the verb to reign, "the queen of the heavens" must be taken for the principal star, as the Chaldee paraphrase regards it.

But some consider that the sun is intended, and some the moon. The sun in Hebrew is of the feminine gender; therefore the sun may properly be called a queen in that language. But if we take it as meaning frame-work, one of the radical letters, א, *aleph*, is wanting, as in the seventh chapter. The Prophet, however, seems to mention here the whole machinery of the heavens, as though the unbelieving had said, that as wonderful glory appeared there, their worship was doubtless pleasing to God, when his majesty was adored in the stars and in the whole frame-work of the heavens. I do not therefore consider that one star is meant, but the very heavens or all the stars; and though the word is in the singular number, yet it means what is commonly called the hosts of heaven.

They then said, "We shall go on in our usual manner; for we have hitherto offered *incense to the fabric* (or the frame-work) *of the heavens*, and poured libations; we shall not then desist from what we have usually done:" and they further said, "So have we done, *we, and our fathers*, and *our kings, and our princes*." Here they set up the authority of fathers in opposition to the authority of God, as it was usually done.

We see also in our day that the Papists superciliously boast of the Fathers and the Catholic Church, when the plain truth is brought forward. They think that darkness overspreads the Word of God, and that whatever is adduced from the Law, from the Prophets, and from the Gospel, is reduced to nothing when they object and say that it is otherwise, that the fathers have spoken otherwise, that it was otherwise understood in old times. We hence see that the Papists of this day fight with the same weapons as idolaters formerly employed; and though the devil transforms himself in various ways, yet superstitious men ever adopt this principle, that whatever is handed down from our forefathers ought to be held sacred; and hypocrites do

especially harden themselves in this error, when they can boast of kings and princes, as was the case in this instance; for they said, that they followed what had been done, not only by the common people, but even by kings and princes. They took it as granted that kings and princes could not have fallen into ignorance. The truth is, that greatness and splendour cover the ignorance and folly of kings. So when simple men speak of kings, their eyes are blinded or dazzled by the magnificence displayed, so that they think kings to be without dispute wise and endowed with the best understanding. Hence it is that Satan is wont often to use such masks for the purpose of deceiving men. Let us therefore learn to render to God altogether the honour of prescribing by his word the law as to religion; and thus let no altitude or dignity be allowed to overshadow the authority of God; but on the contrary, let kings and princes be constrained to submit when God appears.

They afterwards added, *In the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.* And they mentioned these places in order to sanction their own superstitions; for the holiness of Jerusalem was to them a cover for all vices, as we see to be the case at this day with respect to Rome, which is boastfully extolled by the Papists, as though the hypocrisy which sends forth the most nauseous filth through the whole world, were the most perfect holiness. Whatever then comes from Rome, they would have to be counted as a heavenly oracle. In the same manner the wretched Jews dared to set up Jerusalem in opposition to God. Great, indeed, was the dignity of the city, not such is that of Rome at this day; for the Papists have not taken from God's word the encomiums, by which they extol that city, which is really a fœtid and an abominable brothel. Jerusalem had its dignity from God himself; but the Jews in their folly degraded Jerusalem when they corrupted the Law and instituted fictitious worship, according to their own will. And yet we see that they armed themselves with this name, as a weapon, against the Prophet, as though they brought God to fight against himself. Jerusalem had no dignity but that with which God himself had favoured it; but they boasted that it was a holy

city, that whatever was done in it was to be deemed holy and lawful, and not to be disputed, as though God's Law had been lying buried under the dignity of the city. Now Jerusalem had derived its splendour and all the dignity it had from the Law only. But this, as I have said, was the wickedness of men, that they corrupted and perverted the benefits of God.

They then added, that they were *satisfied with bread*, when they burned *incense to the work* or workmanship of *the heavens*. It has ever been a common thing with the despisers of God, that they have been inebriated with earthly things, so as to disregard God himself, and to think that all their superstitions would go unpunished. But whence comes this error? even because men deceive themselves, when God patiently bears with them. God does not immediately take vengeance on the profanation of his name, he does not immediately punish hypocrites and idolaters, he does not immediately fulminate against ungodly and spurious modes of worship: his forbearance seems to be taken as an inducement to sin, as an excitement to licentiousness. When, therefore, the Jews adduced this defence, that they were *satisfied with bread*, it was the same thing as though they had said, "As long as God spared us, and suspended his judgment, it was well with us." But they ought not to have abused the forbearance of God, and thus to have heaped on themselves judgment, as Paul says. Now there was also another cause of error, for when God drew men back from error by chastising them more severely, as they deserved, after seeing they were still obstinate, they then began so to regard God's judgment, as foolishly to think that the cause proceeded from religion being changed. So, at the beginning of the Gospel we see that there were similar complaints among all the ungodly, as the ancients have recorded, and especially *Tertullian*, in his apologies: "If the Tiber inundated, if any calamity happened, if hail or frost, the fault was ascribed to the name of Christ and his doctrine. From the time religion has been changed, we have not ceased to be miserable." But they did not consider as they ought to have done, that when they were blind and sunk in errors, God for a long time

bore with them, and that after the doctrine of the gospel had shone forth, they still wickedly followed their accustomed impiety, which before might have been excused on the ground of ignorance: from the time God had shewn to them the way of salvation, they had resisted it, as it were designedly and wilfully, so that they deserved a heavier punishment.

Such was the impiety of the ancient people according to this answer, *We were satisfied with bread* when we poured out libations to the frame-work of the heavens; that is, as God did not immediately punish their impiety, they were happy and saw no evil. And yet it is certain that they said what was untrue, for God had often chastised them, and at the time they were sedulous and devoted to their false worship. They had gone astray to idolatry before Jeremiah was born; nay, before Isaiah had commenced his office as a Prophet: and we know how severely at that time God punished them for their wickedness; for in the time of Isaiah the kingdom of Israel was distressed, and then wholly destroyed. Jerusalem, as Isaiah says, became like a cottage, and the whole country was laid waste; and at this time they poured out libations to the workmanship of heaven and burnt incense. We know how great was the zeal of Ahaz, and of other wicked kings. Hezekiah, indeed, and Josiah laboured to restore the pure worship of God; but Manasseh, the son and successor of Hezekiah, immediately subverted everything. While then they were so fervid in their superstitions, did all things succeed according to their wishes, as they now boasted? By no means, for God pursued them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence.

What then did this boasting mean, that they were *satisfied* with bread, and were *happy*, and saw no *evil*, at the time they poured out libations? The truth is, that madness so drives on headlong the ungodly, that they perceived not God's hand, when stretched forth against them. But even had they truly said, that they were *happy* at the time they prostituted themselves to idols, yet they could not have hence inferred, that their false worship was approved by God; for when he bears with men for a time, he does not yet cease to

be their judge; for he will at length, in his own time, summon to his tribunal the ungodly whom he has long spared. In short, hypocrites at first trifle with God, and thus turn his mercy to an occasion of sinning, as though there were no punishment; this is one thing: and in the second place, they are not roused by the scourges of God, but remain stupid when God chastises them. It follows,—

18. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all *things*, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.

18. Ex quo autem desiimus suffitum offerre artificio cœlorum et libare ei libamina, destituti (*vel*, privati) fuimus omnibus, et gladio et fame sumus consumpti.

Here he enlarges on their ingratitude, that they attributed to God the fault of all their calamities, when yet God would have drawn them, as the Prophet will hereafter tell us, as it were out of darkness into light, had they been reclaimable. They ought to have been restored, by punishments, to their right mind. But this had been so far from being the case, that the effect of God's scourges had been to render them more and more obstinate.

They then said, that from the time they left off to worship idols, they had been miserable, that they had laboured under the want of everything, and had been consumed by famine and the sword. They had before been consumed, as it is well known, by the famine and the sword, and as we have said, they had before suffered many calamities. Why then did they not refer to these punishments which they had suffered for having so often, and for so long a time, rebelled against God? But they wilfully covered over God's judgments: and yet they said that they had been in every way miserable, since they had ceased from false worship. But was it for this reason they became miserable, because they no longer poured out libations to stars and idols? Nay, the reason was very different, as the Prophet will presently answer them. But we must repeat all their words; we shall come afterwards to the refutation given by the Prophet.

19. And when we burnt incense to the queen of heaven, and poured

19. Et quando nos suffitum fecimus artificio cœlorum, et libavimus

out drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink-offerings unto her, without our men?

ei libamina, an absque viris nostris fecimus ei placentas ad exhilarandum illud (*alii vertunt*, simulachrum,) et etiam libando ei libamina?

They brought forward another argument, that they were not a small portion, but the whole people, who then flourished in prosperity, when they offered incense to idols. We know that but a few remained of that large multitude, which lived when the kingdom as yet existed. They said then that they were not the sole authors of this superstition, but that it was practised by a large number of men, even the whole people, when Jerusalem was full of inhabitants, and the whole country.

Some explain this of the women, but improperly, as I think. The masculine gender is sometimes applied to women, but seldom, and it is harsh, and then it agrees not with this passage, where the whole context shews that men are spoken of; but one reason only leads them to think so, and that is frivolous. It is said, *Have we done* this *without our men?* When, therefore, they said that they had not acted without the men, it has immediately occurred to interpreters that the women spoke; but the word is in the masculine gender. It is well known that אֲנָשִׁים, *anushim*, mean sometimes the aged, and also the princes who bear rule, as it is evident from other passages. But here that small band which remained brought forward the consent of a large multitude, as though they had said, "We here are many against thee who standest alone; but if thou comparest the ancient condition of the city and of the land with our miserable state, when the kingdom flourished, when the city remained in safety, when the whole country was full of inhabitants, did they not all then, with one consent, worship the stars and the workmanship of the heavens? Since, then, this religion has been approved by the consent of so many, what meanest thou in attempting to take it away from us?"

We now, then, perceive the design of the Prophet, or rather we understand the meaning of those whom he has introduced as the speakers. They then said that they did not offer incense and pour out libations without their men, that is, without that large multitude, which afterwards perished

or was consumed; and thus they set up against him, as a cloud, a large number of men, as the Papists do at this day, who, by means of consent, only fight against the truth of God for the purpose of overwhelming it. In like manner did these wretched men contend with Jeremiah; and this pretext was their shield, that the whole people, before the city was demolished, followed these superstitions: *We have*, then, *not done* this *without* our *men*, pouring out libations and offering incense. It now follows,—

20. Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him *that* answer, saying,

21. The incense that ye burnt in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them, and came it *not* into his mind?

22. So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, *and* because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.

23. Because ye have burnt incense, and because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.

20. Et dixit Jeremias ad totum populum, ad viros et mulieres, et ad totum populum, qui responderant ipsi sermonem, dicendo,

21. An non suffitus quem vos sufficebatis (*vel*, adolebatis) in urbibus Jehudah et compitis Jerusalem, vos et patres vestri, reges vestri et duces vestri, et populus terræ, eorum (*hoc est*, ejus suffumigationis, *vel*, harum omnium superstitionum) recordatus est Jehova, et ascenderunt in cor ejus?

22. Et non potuit Jehova amplius ferre propter malitiam operum vestrorum, propter abominationes quas fecistis, et redacta est terra vestra in vastitatem et in stuporem et in maledictum (*vel*, execrationem,) ita ut nemo sit habitator, sicut dies hæc (*hoc est*, sicut hodie apparet.)

23. Propterea quod suffitum fecistis et peccastis Jehovæ (*vel*, impie gessistis contra Jehovam,) et non audivistis vocem Jehovæ, et in lege ejus et statutis et testimoniis non ambulastis, propterea accedit vobis malum hoc, sicut dies hæc (*hoc est*, sicut hodie apparet.)

The Prophet refutes the impious objections by which the Jews had attempted to subvert and to render contemptible his doctrine. He then turns against them all that they had falsely boasted. They had at the beginning said, "*Our kings*, our *princes*, and our *fathers*, had before used these rites; and they have been delivered to us, as it were, by their hands." To this Jeremiah answers, "This is certainly true, and for this reason it was that God became so severe a

judge of their impiety, when he took away your fathers from the world, when he wholly destroyed the kingdom itself, when he demolished the city, and when at length he afflicted you with all kinds of evils: for except your kings, and your fathers, and your princes, had been impious towards God, he would have never treated them with so much severity; for he has promised to be a Father to the children of Abraham. God, then, must have been grievously offended with you, and your fathers, and your kings, when his wrath thus burned against them."

There is, then, here a retort; for as we see that the Prophet turns against them what they had adduced against him. This is the sum of what is said.

He says that he spoke to *the whole people*, both men and women, and he repeats *the whole people*, because all had subscribed to the impious calumny. Then God says, "For this reason have I destroyed your city and you, even because ye burnt incense to your idols." The truth of what they had boasted is allowed, but it is turned to a meaning different from what they thought. For, as their fathers and their kings had imbibed superstitions, they supposed that they were doing right in following them; for, as we have said, hypocrites consider use and custom as sufficient reasons for disregarding the Law. Then, as to the fact itself, the Prophet admits that what they said was quite true, that this had been the cause of all their evils; for had not the kings and the whole people provoked the wrath of God, the temple would not have been demolished, nor the kingdom destroyed; God, in short, would not have alienated himself from his own people whom he had adopted. This is the meaning.

The incense, he says, *which ye have burnt in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, ye and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the whole people of the land, has not Jehovah remembered them?* Whence, he says, has this dreadful calamity proceeded, which has destroyed all your race? Even from the wrath of God, for it has not happened to you by chance, for God had by his servants predicted what afterwards has been really fulfilled. It then follows,

that your city has been destroyed through the righteous judgment of God. And what has been the cause of so great and so grievous a vengeance? Even your incense.

And hence he adds, *Jehovah could not endure the wickedness of your works and the abominations which ye have done: therefore,* he says, *your land has been reduced to a waste.* The Prophet, in short, shews that had they not been justly exposed to God's judgment, they would not have been destroyed. For he assumes this principle, that God is not angry without reason; and then he assumes another principle, that as God had chosen the seed of Abraham, and had been always propitious even to the unworthy, they would have been made partakers of his kindness, had not God been wholly alienated from them. It then follows, that God's vengeance had not been thus kindled by some slight offence, but by many and daily offences, so that it could no longer be deferred: for the atrocity of punishment shews the atrocity of sin; and hence he says, *Jehovah could not endure the wickedness of your works, and the abominations which ye have done: therefore,* he adds, *your land has been made a waste, an astonishment, and a curse,* or execration, *so that there is no inhabitant.*

He at length explains more clearly, in other words, the same thing, *on account of your incense,* he says, *and because ye have done wickedly,* &c. By naming incense especially, stating a part for the whole, he refers to all false and corrupt modes of worship, as it was stated yesterday; but he declares all of them to have been abominable. Then he says, *Ye have acted impiously against God.* He now exaggerates their sin, for they had despised all godly admonitions, *ye have not hearkened,* he says, *to the voice of Jehovah.* I apply this to the discourses of the Prophets, by which God continued to exhort them to repentance; for he daily and constantly addressed them, in order to restore them to the way of salvation. Then the Prophet condemns them, because they hearkened not to the words of the Prophets.

Then he adds, *Nor walked in his Law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies.* He shews by these words, that even if Prophets had not been sent, one after the other, the Law ought to have been sufficient for them. But he was not con-

tent with mentioning the Law only, but added, *statutes and testimonies:* by which words he intimates, as we said yesterday, that the doctrine of the Law was clear and plain.

He at length adds, *Therefore has all this evil happened to you, as it appears at this day.* The Prophet, in short, intimates that their guilt was sufficiently proved, because God had been so angry with them, and they had been so severely afflicted; for if his judgments are right, it follows that the punishment he inflicted on the Jews was right. It may also be hence inferred, that they had been rebellious, because they had perverted and corrupted his true worship.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only in thy Law prescribed to us what is right, and shewed to us the way of a godly life, but hast also more clearly revealed thy will to us by the light of thy Gospel, where Christ thy Son shines forth as the Sun of righteousness,—O grant, that we may submit ourselves wholly to thee, and from the heart render thee obedience, and to this apply all our efforts and direct all our doings, so that having finished the course of this life, we may at length come into that blessed rest which has been prepared for us in heaven by Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-Third.

24. Moreover, Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt;

25. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.

26. Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have

24. Et dixit Jeremias ad totum populum et ad mulieres, Audite sermonem Jehovæ, omnis Jehudah, qui estis in terra Ægypti,

25. Sic dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, dicendo, Vos et uxores vestræ locuti estis ore vestro, et implevistis manibus vestris, dicendo, Faciendo faciemus vota vestra, quæ vovimus ad suffitum adolendum artificio cœli et ad fundendum ei libamina, stabiliendo stabilietis vota vestra, et faciendo facietis vota vestra:

26. Propterea audite sermonem Jehovæ, totus Jehudah, qui habitatis in terra Ægypti, Ecce juravi per

sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth.

nomen meum magnum, dicit Jehova, si erit posthac nomen meum invocatum in ore (per os) viri Judæi dicentis, Vivit Adonai Jehova in tota terra Ægypti.

JEREMIAH pursues the same subject, and not only bitterly reproves the ungodly men who so pertinaciously despised his doctrine, but also shews that they could gain nothing by their audacity, because they would at length be violently broken down, as they could not bear to be corrected. He says at the beginning, *Ye and your wives have spoken;* the men are also included, Ye have spoken both men and women, and *with your hands have fulfilled it;* that is, your obstinacy is complete, for, as you have spoken insolently against God, so there has been a performance; for by *hands* he designates the work done. He then shews that they had advanced to the highest pitch of impiety, for they hesitated not to vomit forth these impious words, *We will not obey God*, and they joined their hands to their mouth, for they strenuously executed what they had said. The thought itself was sufficient to condemn them; but when they thus spoke with their tongues, and then employed their hands against God, it was a proof of desperate audacity, as though they wilfully designed to provoke him.

But he shews what issue awaited these impious men, who so presumptuously rebelled against God. When he bids them to hear what God on the other hand had sworn, he compares God with themselves, as though he had said, "You may a hundred times increase in your madness, yet God will be the conqueror; for he is an adversary who will surely subvert all schemes and efforts." But before he comes to this, he mentions what they said, *Doing we shall do our vows which we have vowed, to burn incense*, &c. Here Jeremiah relates what we have before seen, that the Jews, under the pretext of doing what had been before done, continued thus rebellious against God. We perceive this by the word *vows;* and the superstitious, when they are pressed, are wont always to flee to this pretext, that to persevere in one's resolution is a great virtue. While, then, they avoid the charge of fickleness, they harden themselves against God.

The same thing we see at this day under the Papacy: The older any one is, the more obstinate he is. "What! have I not learned during forty or fifty years what religion is, and how to worship God? I have been thus taught from a child, and have by a long habit followed this way: it would be now a disgraceful thing for me to change my course and to relinquish the faith which I have professed for so many years."

There is, then, no doubt but the Jews made a pretence of this kind against Jeremiah, when they said that they had *vowed*. For hypocrites make no distinction when they vow anything, but indiscriminately obtrude on God whatever comes to their minds; they afterwards stand fixed in their foolish fancies, and say that a vow is inviolable, a sacred thing. Such was the excuse of the people. But we see from the Prophet's answer how vainly they did bring forward in opposition to God their vows, which had been made without judgment and without reason.

And this passage ought to be carefully noticed; so that we may especially know, that it is a folly in no way pleasing to God, when men indiscriminately vow whatever they may dream according to their own fancies. God then would have sobriety and regard to his will to be observed as to vows. But when any one has made an inconsiderate vow, pertinaciously to persist in it is no less displeasing to God than the vow itself. The Jews had vowed; the warning of the Prophet ought to have constrained them to change their resolution. But while they avoided every kind of fickleness, we see that instead of constancy they set up their own perverseness and diabolical obstinacy in opposition to God. When, therefore, we rashly make vows, disapproved by God, nothing is better than immediately to retract them; for we have already sinned more than enough in having abused the holy name of God. For this reason the Prophet says, that the Jews spoke thus, *Doing we shall do the vows we have vowed;* and what were these? To offer incense to the stars and to hosts of heaven. Had they vowed anything to God, they ought not to have broken their pledged faith; but they had made vows to the devil; then they ought to have immedi-

ately changed their purpose. When I say that vows made to God ought to be performed, I mean lawful vows; for he who makes a vow without judgment, does not vow to God; but those vows which God sanctions ought to be deemed sacred; and whatever vows God repudiates, ought to be counted as nothing. We hence see that the Jews were justly condemned, for they pertinaciously paid their vows to their own idols.

He adds by way of irony, *Confirming ye will confirm your vows, doing ye will do your vows.* Here the Prophet sharply checks their insolence, because they thus set up themselves against God, as though it were a great virtue to persevere in their wicked purpose; ye cannot change, he says, but confirming ye will confirm your vows!

Hear ye now, he says, *the word of Jehovah,* &c. By these words, as I have already hinted, he intimates, that they could gain nothing by their insolence, except that they would thereby provoke God, who on the other hand did set up his own power against them. *Thus,* then, *saith Jehovah,* Behold, *I have sworn by my great name,* &c. As they had so often disregarded God speaking to them, he confirmed by an oath what he was going to say. Had he only threatened, they might have as usual disregarded him, as though the Prophet spoke what was vain. This is the reason why he now introduces God as making an oath. And it ought to be observed, that whenever God confirms his words by an oath, this he does, either because he sees that he has to do with men who are like stones, who cannot be made to feel by simple truth; or when he is pleased to give aid to our infirmity and sloth: for God confirms threatenings as well as promises by an oath. When he thus confirms threatenings, then he indirectly condemns the obstinate wickedness of those whom he addresses. But when he promises anything by an oath, he shews how great our propensity is to indulge doubts, and what weakness there is in our faith; for were such faith in us as ought to be, we should be contented with one little word. As, then, God interposes his own name as a pledge, it hence appears, that we are naturally unbelieving, or that the weakness of our faith is such that it wants

this support. But here, as God threatens, he shews that the Jews were so obstinate in their wickedness, that it was necessary to shake them by terror.

Now, God makes an oath by *his own great name.* Men, as the Apostle says, swear by God, (Heb. vi. 16;) because he is called as a witness and a judge when his name is interposed. But it is no superfluous addition, when God not only swears by himself, but by his own *great name.* For he thus intimated, that the Jews were greatly deceived, if they thought that God would not execute vengeance on them, because they indulged themselves. For it is a common thing with hypocrites to measure God by their own judgment; and when they extenuate his power, they think of him as of a child. In order, then, to divest the Jews of this false imagination, he says, *by his own great name.* There is, then, implied here a contrast between the greatness of God's name, which cannot be diminished at the will of man, and the presumption of the ancient people, who rendered God's name contemptible.

He afterwards adds, *If my name,* &c. It is an imperfect sentence, which, as we have often said, was frequently used in order that a greater reverence may be observed by us, when we swear by God's name. We must now come to what is said, *There shall not be a Jew, who is to swear any more in my name.* God himself makes an oath, and what is the oath which he makes? that no one was to profane his name; for they thought that it was some evidence of religion when they swore by Jehovah. It was yet nothing but an awful profanation of God's name. They contaminated themselves, as it appears, with Egyptian superstitions; but that they might differ from the Egyptians themselves and possess something special, that they, in short, might seem to be a holy nation, they still retained a form of swearing, distinct from what was common among the Gentiles. God declares that he would not suffer his name to be any more irreverently used in Egypt. *Not invoked,* he says, *shall be my name any more by the mouth of a Jew.* And that he speaks of oaths we gather from the next verse, when he says, *Live doth Jehovah in all the land of Egypt.* For, as it has been said, the

Jews as yet boasted that they kept the Law, because God's name was still in their mouth and on their tongue. But God says that it was to be taken away from them, because it was a disgraceful pollution of his name, when they mingled themselves with the Egyptians in all kinds of superstitions, and yet boasted that they were God's people. It follows,—

27. Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good; and all the men of Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them.

27. Ecce ego vigilo super eos in malum, et non in bonum; et consumentur omnes viri (omnis vir, *ad verbum*) Jehudah, quicunque sunt in terra Ægypti gladio et fame usque dum consumantur (*est quidem aliud verbum, sed ejusdem significationis.*)

Here he more clearly expresses what he had said in the last verse, that none of the Jews would remain alive in Egypt. He now then points out the manner, even because he would not cease to consume them until they wholly perished and were brought to final ruin. He had said, *No more shall my name be called, nor shall the Jews in Egypt swear, Live doth Jehovah;* and why? because I will destroy them all, so that there will be none remaining in Egypt to pollute under a false pretence my name.

I will watch over them, he says, *for evil and not for good.* This mode of speaking we have observed elsewhere, and explained why the Prophets spoke thus, even because hypocrites, though they think God cares not for human affairs, and imagine that he sleeps in heaven, and hence audaciously provoke him, as though they were fugitives and their purpose hid from God, yet boast of God's providence, and pretend that they acquiesce confidently in him. For this reason the Prophet answered, that God watched indeed, but *not for good.* We then perceive the object of the Prophet; he derided the presumption of the people, who thought that God had a care for their safety. He then says, that God indeed does not sleep, but that this would bring no benefit to hypocrites; for though God watches as a father to preserve his own people, he yet watches as a judge to destroy all the ungodly. It follows,—

28. Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of

28. Et qui evaserint e gladio revertentur e terra Ægypti in terram Jehudah pauci numero; et cognos-

Judah; and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs.

cent omnes reliquiæ Jehudah, quæ ingressi sunt terram Ægypti, ut habitarent illic, sermo quis stabit a me, an ab ipsis.

He at length adds that a few would escape. He had said before, (verse 14,) that there would be none, but added at the end of the verse, "but such as shall escape." We said that this second clause is to be explained of the Jews who had been driven into exile in Babylon. But if it be applied to exiles in Egypt the meaning will be different. For the Prophet then said that none would escape, that none would remain alive: he thus doubtless took away every hope of deliverance with regard to those in Egypt. But he added, "but such as shall escape," that is, such as should stealthily escape from the sword, as though they had never migrated into Egypt. And then in this different sense must necessarily be taken what the Prophet adds now, *They who escape shall return.* But we must bear in mind that those remaining alive would not be numbered among the exiles, for they must have withdrawn themselves so as no longer to form a part of that people. They had before become fugitives, but when they departed from Egypt, that second flight made them to be no longer a residue in that land.

When, therefore, the Prophet declares that none of the residue would escape, we must understand the words as meaning, that there would be Jews no more in Egypt, as their memory would be obliterated. But when, in the second place, he mentions evaders, פְּלִיטִים, *pelithim*, (the word which we have rendered, "They who shall escape,") he means that those who escaped had now ceased to be counted among the residue, having in a manner of their own accord separated themselves from them, so that they were no longer to be reckoned among the fugitive exiles in Egypt. Then he says, that *those who escape from the sword would return into the land of Judah;* an event wholly different from what they looked for, for they expected to return to their own country in a triumphant manner. They intended indeed to dwell in Egypt only for a time; and they hoped to come afterwards into a free possession of the

land, when the Chaldeans had gone far away. Thus they had promised to themselves a new kingdom, and were not disposed to return except in great pomp. As, then, such a restoration had been imagined by them, the Prophet says, that *a few only would return into the land of Judah;* and then that they would return, not to possess the land and enjoy it as their own inheritance, but that they would return, because there would be no safe corner where they might hide themselves. We hence see that this return is set up in opposition to the false imagination in which the Jews indulged; and he says that a few only would return.

And at length he adds, *All the remnant of Judah who had entered into the land of Egypt, shall know whose word shall stand, mine,* or *theirs.* Here at length the sentence is completed, for I have said that it was the Prophet's object to convince the Jews of their foolish and impious presumption, when in their perverseness they contended against God, as though he had said, "What do you mean, ye wretched beings? Is the truth of God to give way, or can you frustrate his purpose by your madness and obstinacy? And surely God will prove stronger than you." He now then fully explains his meaning. By saying, *all shall know,* he does not refer to true and sincere knowledge, but to experience, that is, they shall at length really find out whose word is firm, mine or theirs.

This passage deserves special attention; we hence learn that we ought to acquiesce in God's word, and wholly to receive it, and especially to beware of that diabolical obstinacy which the Prophet here condemns; for when we fight to the last, we must at the end necessarily fall; though we may a hundred times complain and clamour, yet God's word will stand firm and will never yield to us. It follows,—

29. And this *shall be* a sign unto you, saith the Lord, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:

30. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek

29. Et hoc vobis signum, dicit Jehovah, quod visitabo ego super vos in hoc loco, ut sciatis quod stando stabunt sermones mei super vos in malum.

30. Sic dicit Jehova, Ecce ego trado Pharaonem Ophra regem Ægypti in manum inimicorum ejus, et in manum quærentium animam

his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life.

ejus; quemadmodum tradidi Zedechiam regem Jehudah in manum Nabuchadnezer regis Babylonis, inimici ejus et quærentis animam ejus.

Jeremiah seals his prophecy by adding a sign which yet was to be coincident with it. It was not then, as they say, a premonstrative sign. And doubtless the Jews were wholly unworthy that God should shew them anything extraordinary; but this sign was only added, that they might know that they in vain trusted in the protection of Egypt, and also that every excuse might be taken away.

This brief notice may perhaps be obscure. We shall therefore refer to a distinction that exists: some signs precede the time and order of things, but others are connected with the events themselves. The signs which precede events avail to prepare the minds of the faithful, so that they may not doubt but that God will do what he has promised, as when Gideon sought a sign from God, and it was granted to him; the ground was wet with dew, while the fleece remained dry; and then the fleece remained dry when the ground was wet. (Judges vi. 36-40.) By this sign Gideon was encouraged to proceed in his course, when before doubt made him inert. Gideon was torpid, but when he saw by this miracle that victory would be given him, he boldly undertook the work assigned to him. The greatest portion of signs are of this kind. But there are other signs which do not precede events, but shew that when the time is fulfilled the events have been truly predicted, as when God said to Moses, "This sign I give thee, that after ye have come out of Egypt ye shall sacrifice to me in this mountain." (Exod. iii. 12.) Neither Moses nor the people could know anything by that sign before they had departed from Egypt. But after they were delivered they there gave thanks on the third day to God their Redeemer.

Hence signs refer sometimes to past time, and sometimes to what is future. Those which refer to the future are such as we call premonstrative, as the case was with Gideon, who took up arms with alacrity, because he knew that he was fighting under God's banner; and he was fully persuaded of a victory when he understood that God would be his leader.

This sign then had a reference to what was future. But the sign given to Moses was retrospective, for the people more clearly saw that God had been their deliverer, because it had been predicted to Moses when yet in the desert that the Israelites would come there; and that place, even Mount Sinai, had been already destined for that worship which afterwards was presented to God. The people at the time considered this, and by calling to mind what had been predicted, they were more and more confirmed as to their faith in God's favour. Such was also the sign mentioned here, *This shall be a sign*, says Jeremiah, even that God would *deliver Pharaoh-hophrah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar his enemy.*

Had any one then asked the Prophet why he spoke of the king of Egypt, he would have said, "Now indeed this sign remains as it were buried, its use is not seen; but God will in due time shew that I have been entrusted with his commands, for whatever I predict of the king of Egypt shall be fulfilled." This sign was also added, for the thing seemed incredible,. that is, that Egypt could be conquered, which was strongly fortified on every side. As, then, there was no entrance open for enemies, especially from Pelusium, the Jews thought that they dwelt, as they say, within the circle of the moon, and that they were placed beyond the reach of danger. Since, then, they confided in the protection of Egypt, and thought the land unassailable, this their confidence was laughed to scorn.

And the Prophet expressly mentions the surname of Pharaoh, which was Hophra, the meaning of which is not known to me; and it is probably an Egyptic word, for there is no such word in Hebrew: and it is not known whence the word Pharaoh has come. We know that all the kings of Egypt had this name, as the emperors of Rome were called Cæsars, in memory of Julius Cæsar. The kings of Egypt were in the same manner called Pharaohs. But each had his own name to distinguish him from the rest; and this king was called Hophra.

Now what the Prophet predicted, if we believe *Josephus*, was fulfilled about the fourth year after they had departed into Egypt. For Nebuchadnezzar went down again into

Egypt, after having spoiled the Moabites and the Ammonites, and at length took possession of that kingdom. But it was a hateful message, when Jeremiah predicted the ruin of the kingdom. Nor is there a doubt, but that danger appeared before his eyes, when he saw that he addressed ungodly men, who a hundred times wished him to be destroyed. When therefore he dared to prophesy against the king, the whole people, and the land, we hence see how great must have been his firmness and his courage, still boldly to discharge his office; for he was not terrified by danger, but promulgated whatever God had committed to him. We then have here a singular example of magnanimity; for the Prophet hesitated not to risk his own life while obeying God.

By saying, *I will deliver the king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies, and of them who seek his life*, he intimates that there would be fatal enemies, though he speaks only of one enemy, but he connects the army with its head: *I will deliver Pharaoh* then *into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, as I have delivered Zedekiah into the hand of his enemy and of him who sought his life;* as though he had said, "The condition of the king of Egypt will not be better than that of Zedekiah." For Zedekiah occupied that sacred throne of which God had testified, "Here will I dwell;" and further, "On the throne of David shall one of his posterity ever continue."

We hence see, that the Prophet reasons from the greater to the less; for if God had not spared King Zedekiah, who was, as it were, a sacred person, nothing better could be hoped for as to the king of Egypt, who reigned only in a manner usual and common. The sum of what is said then is, that the Jews had been already sufficiently taught by facts how true his prophecies were; for he had predicted what at length happened to Zedekiah; but his word was not believed. "It is now the time," he says, "when the Jews must know that I am God's faithful servant, as God had added a proof in the case of Zedekiah, which ought to have remained fixed in their memory." Now, if they thought that the king of Egypt was beyond danger, they ascribed great injustice to

God, who had not delivered Zedekiah, who had been anointed in his name, and by his command. This then is the import of the passage.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since by our adoption, thou hast favoured us with this honour, that we may call on thy name,—O grant, that we may with a pure mouth call on thee, that thou mayest be glorified among us, through the whole course of our life; and that whilst we labour to render to thee that sincere obedience which thou requirest, thy truth may be more and more propagated among us, and that the memory of thy name may flourish more and more, until we shall at length come into that glory, which we know is laid up for us in heaven, by Christ our Lord. —Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-Fourth.

CHAPTER XLV.

1. The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying,

1. Sermo quem loquutus est Jeremias Propheta ad Baruch filium Neriæ cum scriberet sermones istos in libro ex ore Jeremiæ anno quarto Joiakim filii Josiæ regis Jehudah, dicendo,

2. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch;

2. Sic dicit Jehova, Deus Israel ad te (*vel*, de te) Baruch,

3. Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I found no rest.

3. Dixisti, Væ nunc mihi, quia addidit Jehova mœrorem super dolorem meum, laboravi (*vel*, defessus sum) in gemitu meo et requiem non inveni:

4. Thus shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus, Behold, *that* which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.

4. Sic dices ad eum, Sic dicit Jehova, Ecce quæ ædificavi ego diruo, et quæ plantavi evello, nempe totam terram hanc;

5. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek *them* not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

5. Et tu quæres tibi magnifica? Ne quæsieris; quia ego adducam malum super universam carnem, dicit Jehova; et dabo tibi animam tuam in spolium omnibus locis quocunque tu veneris.

We have said that prophetic books were not written by their authors in the order in which they are now read. But when a Prophet had preached, and committed to writing a

summary of his doctrine, he fixed it to the doors of the Temple. And there were scribes who collected the summaries, and the volumes now extant were made from these. I now repeat the same thing, because some one may wonder that the order of time was not observed by Jeremiah: for hereafter he will prophesy of heathen nations; and it is certain, that these prophecies were announced, in part, before the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, some during his reign, and some in the time of Zedekiah. But the reason I have stated ought to be borne in mind, that this book we have now in our hands was not written by Jeremiah himself, but that it contains collected summaries, afterwards formed into one volume.

Here is told us a special prophecy concerning Baruch, who, as we know, was the Prophet's scribe, and not only his scribe or amanuensis, but also his disciple. And here Jeremiah relates, that he was gravely and severely reproved, because he shewed not a mind sufficiently firm, when the book mentioned in chapter thirty-six was to be written. Some think that there was a just reason for his grief, because Jeremiah declared that the ruin of the city and the people was nigh at hand. They then think that Baruch was anxious, nay, oppressed with sorrow when he heard that so dreadful a judgment of God was near; for there is no doubt but that he regarded his country with becoming devotion, and that he was solicitous concerning the worship of God, and for the safety of the people whom God had chosen out of all nations, and adopted. But as we shall hereafter see, he looked rather to himself, and was led to grief and sorrow on his own account; and for this he was severely reproved by the Prophet. Others bring forward an explanation by no means satisfactory, that he coveted the gift of prophecy, when he saw that Jeremiah pronounced, as from on high, words so weighty, and was the instrument of the Holy Spirit, as though he exercised a celestial judgment. They hence think that Baruch was stimulated by a vain desire for the prophetic office, and that he was reproved because he assumed more than what was right. But this fiction, as I have already said, has nothing to support it.

I do not doubt, therefore, but that he apprehended danger to himself, because the message which the Prophet had committed to him was greatly disliked. For we see in the chapter to which I have referred, that the Prophet did not go to the king, but dictated the contents of the book, and gave it to Baruch. When, therefore, he saw that he could not discharge his duty without danger, he began to complain and to murmur; and it was on this account that the Prophet, by God's command, reproved his weakness. The meaning then is, that Baruch, as he feared for his life, was affected with too much grief, so that he wished to be freed from all trouble, and that God was offended with this extreme fear, and gave a command to his Prophet to reprove Baruch, as he deserved. Let us now come to the words.

The word which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah. We must notice, that the holy man did not spare his own disciple, whom yet he no doubt loved; for he had employed him, and Baruch had acted faithfully, not only as his scribe, but also as his fellow-helper. As then Jeremiah had proved the fidelity, care, and diligence of Baruch in many things, he wished, no doubt, to treat him with kindness; but as God would have this fault in Baruch to be corrected, the Prophet performed this duty that belonged to his office. We hence see that he forgot flesh and blood, when he had to do his work for God. The circumstance as to time is added: and hence we may infer what I have already stated, that Baruch, when in danger of his life, was anxious, and complained of his own case, as though God had laid on him a burden too heavy and hard to be borne; for the Prophet says that he received this command *when Baruch wrote the words in the book, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.*

We have briefly related how this happened; but it must be added, that Baruch did not fear without reason, because the king was already displeased with Jeremiah. He was not indeed altogether cruel, but he had bad counsellors, who were like fans, ready to kindle up his rage; and the issue proved, that this fear was not without cause; for the king took a penknife and cut the book in pieces, and then threw it into the fire: and if Jeremiah could then have been found,

no doubt all would have been over with him, as to his life. But Baruch had been warned by kind men to conceal himself together with the Prophet. We hence see that Baruch was frightened, because his message was so disagreeable, and calculated to drive the king to extremities, as it happened. At the same time, he was too much given to care for himself, for he ought to have presented his life as a sacrifice to God. For all who are called to such an office, are in duty bound to undergo all dangers with courage, so as to disregard life when necessary, or at least to commit it to the care of God; and when they see dangers nigh, they ought still to proceed in the course of their office. Though, then, Baruch wished faithfully to serve God, yet in the conflict he was overcome by temptation, so that he was more anxious for his life than animated to proceed in his course. It is to this that the time mentioned by the Prophet refers, when he says, that Baruch was reproved *when he wrote the words in a book.*

The prophecy is afterwards more clearly expressed, *Thus saith Jehovah of Baruch.* The Prophet sets on him and accosts him, in order that he might fill his mind with holy fear, in order to correct that sinful fear, by which he was impeded in strenuously serving God. *Thou hast said,* the cause of the reproof is expressed—*thou hast said, Wo is to me now! for Jehovah has added sorrow to my grief.* Baruch no doubt wished to withdraw from his office, as is the case with those who are too much pressed, when they find that they are unequal to their task; they seek hiding-places and become runagates. Such, then, was the feeling of Baruch when he said, *Wo is to me now!* It was highly honourable to be a scribe to a Prophet, for it was the same thing as though he received words from the mouth of an angel. It was then unworthy and disgraceful for the holy servant of God to complain of his own misery, when yet it was an evidence of singular favour, that God had been pleased to choose him for such an office. Here then the ingratitude of Baruch is condemned, when he exclaimed that he was miserable, while yet he ought to have deemed it a singular happiness, that God had called him to that work.

He says, *Jehovah has added sorrow to my grief.* Here

the ingratitude of Baruch breaks out still more; for he expostulated with God, as though he had said, that he was not kindly treated. And there is an implied reproach in this complaint; for it is the same thing as though he called in question God's justice, and charged him with too much severity. At the same time he complains that there was no end, as though he had said, that he had already suffered too much, and that God was not acting kindly with him, because he added evils to evils. *Jehovah*, he says, ***has added sorrow to my grief.*** It seems that יָגוֹן, *igun*, is more than מַכְאֹב, *mecab*, for Baruch intimates that he had already suffered *grief*, there being an occasion for it; but that now an addition of *sorrow* or mourning was made to so many griefs.

We hence conclude, that Baruch did not shrink immediately at the first conflict, as slothful men do; but that he vacillated in the middle of his course. And this ought to be carefully observed; for they who have once courageously performed their office, think themselves endued as with angelic fortitude. Hence it comes that they boldly disregard all dangers, because they believe themselves to be invincible. But we see that Baruch was for a time a strenuous and courageous servant of God; but when there appeared no end, he began to grow faint. Let us then learn constantly to flee to God and to seek of him a new increase of grace, so that he may sustain us by the power of his Spirit, and raise us up, when fallen, for otherwise we cannot but fall every moment, even when our career seems glorious; but let us learn, being mindful of our infirmities, to ask the Lord to hold us up and to stretch forth his hand to us every day. This is what we are to observe in the example of Baruch, when he says, that sorrow was added to his grief.

But he afterwards expresses the same thing more clearly; *I have laboured in my groaning*, he says, *and found no rest.* By these words also, he testifies that he had been exposed to various evils, that his troubles were not as yet alleviated, or that he was not freed from dangers, and that at length he succumbed, for no rest was given him. We hence see what I have already stated, that Baruch was not refractory imme-

diately at starting, but that when he had already made progress, having completed a part of the race, he was overcome with trials and overwhelmed, before he reached the goal.

He afterwards adds, *Thus shalt thou say to him*, &c. Here the Prophet shews that he was not roused against Baruch through any private displeasure, but that he had only conveyed to him God's message. *Behold, what I have built I pull down*, and what I have planted *I root up*. Here it is evident that the cause of the reproof was, that Baruch loved himself too much, and wished to evade dangers when God ordered him to engage in the conflict. Jeremiah sets forth what would be to the whole people. The comparison shews what I have stated, that Baruch, disregarding the public safety, was too cautious, and was thus timid and tender as to his own life. This is the reason why God mentions the whole people, as though he had said, "Dost thou wish to be deemed of more importance than the whole people? Is thy life of more value than the wellbeing of the whole community?" It was a disgrace to Baruch to prefer himself to the whole people, and even to the Temple and the worship of God. When, therefore, the severity of God was now ready to fall on the whole people, though Baruch might have endangered his life a hundred times, yet he ought not to have made so much account of his life. Then the Prophet shews here that Baruch was too delicate as to himself; and because he was blinded by the love of himself, he did not consider the public safety of the people, nor did he regard the Temple and the holy land.

These metaphors of building and planting often occur in Scripture, I shall not therefore dwell on them here. But we must observe, that though God be the creator of the whole world, yet the people of Israel were peculiarly his work, and also the land of Israel. For God had consecrated that land to himself that he might be served in it, and had adopted the people. Hence he often compares that people to a vineyard. "O my vineyard, I have planted thee." (Chap. ii. 21; Is. v. 1-7.) I will not multiply quotations, for in a thing so easy it would be a foolish ostentation to heap together many texts. God, then, had built his people, because they

dwelt there as in their own habitations, and the land was called his rest. He had also planted his people. We may remark, in short, that the building mentioned here and also the plantation, refer to those special favours which God had bestowed on that people. For though he had planted the whole world and all nations, yet the people of Israel was especially his planting, as it is said by Isaiah, "The planting of the Lord is for glory," that is, this people had been planted, that God through them might manifest his own glory. (Is. lxi. 3.)

Let us come now to what is here declared; he says, *I pull down what I have built, I root up what I have planted;* as though he had said, "I have hitherto adorned this people with singular endowments; for I chose them as a heritage to myself, it is a holy race, it is a priestly kingdom, I dwell in the midst of them, I have undertaken the care of defending them, I am their Father, they are to me not only as a son, but also as a first-born; and then this land is holy, because I have set my name in it: I have therefore built and planted this people and this land; but now, he says, I am pulling down and rooting up."

It afterwards follows, *And seekest thou great things for thyself?* We now see clear enough why he reproved Baruch, it was, because he was too careful as to himself, and too timid; and thus it was that he was impeded in his duty. He then says, *And dost thou seek for thyself?* The particle לך, *lac*, for thyself, is put here emphatically; for here God sets Baruch in the balance, and the whole people together, with the temple and divine worship. "Dost thou," he says, "*outweigh* them? Is thy life of more value than the temple, the safety of the people, and all my gifts which so much excel?" It was then God's purpose in this way to make Baruch ashamed of himself, because he preferred a frail life to so many things and so glorious. *Dost thou*, then, he says, *seek great things*, גדלות, *gidalut, for thyself?* that is, "Shall thy state be eminent while the temple is burnt with fire, while the land is laid waste, while most men perish, and the remnant are driven into exile and captivity? Art thou then alone to be deemed sacred? Art thou alone to be exempt

from loss and trouble? See, is all this right?" Here then he made Baruch himself the judge.

But as Baruch might as yet flatter himself, he immediately restrains him; *Seek not*, he says, for we know how men from self-love seek their own indulgence. That Baruch then might not persist in his course, God puts a check on all his ambitious feelings; *Seek not*, he says. He afterwards adds a ground of consolation. Baruch has been thus far severely reproved, as he deserved, on account of his self-indulgence; but God now forgives him, and adds a comfort which might in part alleviate his sorrow; *For behold*, he says, *I will bring evil on all flesh, and I will give thee thy life for a prey in all places whither thou goest.* Here God frees Baruch from that distressing fear by which he had been debilitated, so as not to possess suitable firmness for his work. He then says, "Fear not, for thy life shall be safe to thee while all around thee are destroyed." Baruch thought that he should perish while the people were safe and secure; but God declares that none of the people would be safe, and that he would be safely preserved while all the rest were perishing.

I will bring evil, he says, *on all flesh.* He speaks indeed briefly, but Baruch must have well considered what he had received from the mouth of the Prophet, for he ought to have been fully persuaded as to the faithfulness and immutable purpose of God. God then assumes this fact, that ruin was nigh as to the whole people and other nations. He afterwards adds, *Thy life will I give thee as a prey.* Of this kind of language we have before spoken. To give one his life for a prey was to deliver him as it were from instant death. As when all things are exposed to plunder, if one snatched this or that and escaped, he would have something saved; or as if one plucked anything from the burning, he would have it preserved; so when all things were thrown into such a confusion, that death would beset men on every side, he who could escape in safety would have his life as a prey when removed from all danger. Then God bids Baruch to be content with the benefit of being safe, while others, as I have said, were perishing. Now follows,—

CHAPTER XLVI.

1. The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles;

2. Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.

1. Qui fuit sermo Jehovæ (*ita ad verbum*) ad Jeremiam Prophetam super cunctas Gentes:

2. Quantum ad Ægyptum, contra exercitum Pharaonis Necho, regis Ægypti qui erat super flumen Euphratem in Charchamis, quem percussit Nabuchadnezer, rex Babylonis, anno quarto Jehoiakim, filii Josiæ, regis Jehudah.

Jeremiah begins here to prophesy against foreign nations, and continues to do so to the last chapter but one, not that he then for the first time began to announce these oracles, but as I have already said, a volume was at length formed, including his prophecies, the order of time being not everywhere observed; for we see in the 25th chapter that he threatened heathen nations with the punishments they had deserved before Jehoiakim was made king. But as I have said, the prophecies respecting heathen nations have been separated, though as to time Jeremiah had predicted what afterwards happened.

He then says that he had prophesied of the destruction of the *Egyptian army* which King Nebuchadnezzar overthrew *in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.* Jeremiah had then foretold before this time what was to be. It might have been that before Pharaoh-necho prepared his army, Jeremiah predicted what would take place; but it is probable that this prophecy was announced at the time when Pharaoh-necho went forth against the Chaldeans, for he was fighting then for the Assyrians. As they were not equal to the Chaldeans they made a treaty with the Egyptians. They then had come for a subsidy to drive away the Babylonians, and thus to defend the Assyrians against their forces. But at first the expedition met with success; yet at last what had been predicted by the Prophet was fulfilled.

It is not known whether or not the design was to alleviate the sorrow of the people by this prophecy; and yet I am disposed to receive wha' ater part of interpreters

have held, that as at that time the people were in the greatest trouble, this prophecy was given in order that the faithful might know that God had not ceased to care for his people. But we must especially attend to the truth of history, for when Pharaoh-necho was induced, as it has been said, by the Assyrians, to lead his army to the Euphrates, the pious king Josiah met him, and he was then a confederate with the Babylonians, because there had been a friendly intercourse between the Chaldeans and the Jews since the reign of Hezekiah. As then Josiah wished to render service to a king who was his friend, he opposed the army of Pharaoh; but he was conquered and slain. Now the expedition of Pharaoh was fortunate and successful for a time, but when he began to boast of victory he was suddenly cast down; for King Nebuchadnezzar not only checked his audacity, but having routed his army, compelled him to return into Egypt, and occupied the whole country from the Euphrates to Palusium. That country had not yet been exposed to those continual changes which afterwards happened, that is, when those robbers who had succeeded Alexander the Great boasted that they were the kings of kings, and when every one strove to draw all things to himself. For hence it happened that now Egyptian kings, and then Asiatic kings, often shook that land as far as they could. This had not yet happened when Jeremiah prophesied, nor had Alexander been yet born, but it yet appears that these regions were even then subject to changes, so that there was nothing fixed or permanent connected with them. We must then bear in mind that the events of wars were dubious, so that, one while, the Egyptians forcibly seized a portion of Asia, and at another time the Assyrians diminished their power, and again the Chaldeans. Pharaoh-necho was then so repulsed that he never dared again to come forth, as sacred history testifies in 2 Kings xxiv. 7.

Let us now come to the Prophecy of Jeremiah. He says that he *prophesied against the army of Pharaoh-necho, when it was at Euphrates*, that is when he fought there and thought that he would be a conqueror, as he had far and wide desolated a hostile land, and brought under his authority many

cities. When therefore he had met with great successes, Jeremiah was then bidden to prophesy against his army, so that the Jews might know that the death of pious Josiah would not go unpunished, because God had purposed to destroy that great army by which Josiah had been killed, and so to break down and lay prostrate the power of Egypt, that King Pharaoh would hereafter remain as shut up in prison as it afterwards happened. The rest to-morrow.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been pleased to call us to the spiritual warfare, we may never be wearied; and that, as our weakness is so great that we are unequal to our conflicts, O grant, that being supported by the power of thy Spirit, we may persevere in the course of thy holy calling, and never be broken down by anything that may happen to us, but learn so to break through all dangers as to commit our life into thy hands, and be in the meantime prepared to live or to die, until thou gatherest us into that blessed rest which is laid up for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-Fifth.

3. Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle.

4. Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with *your* helmets; furbish the spears, *and* put on the brigandines.

5. Wherefore have I seen them dismayed *and* turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: *for* fear *was* round about, saith the Lord.

3. Preparate scutum et clypeum et accedite ad prælium.

4. Ligate equos et ascendite equites, et state (statute vos) in galeis vestris, abstergite lanceas, induite loricas.

5. Quare vidi ipsos fractos, aversos retrorsum? et fortes eorum percutientur (percussi sunt) et fuga fugerunt, et non respexerunt; terror undique, dicit Jehova.

JEREMIAH uses now a form of speaking very common in the Prophets though remote from common use. For the Prophets, when they denounce God's judgments and punishments on the ungodly, do not speak in a simple language, as though they were giving a narrative, but they employed figurative expressions, as though they wished to introduce men into the very scene itself. And that their doctrine might more effectually penetrate into the hearts of men,

they bring forward various persons; they at one time introduce God as speaking, and at another they pronounce this or that according to the sentiments of others; and again, they declare the commands of God.

Jeremiah begins here by summoning the Egyptians, as though he were the herald of Pharaoh, and thus borrows the name of another person. He says, *Prepare.* The verb ערך, *orec*, properly means to set in order, but here it signifies to prepare; *Prepare*, then, *the buckler and the shield.* The word צנה, *tsane*, was a shield of a larger form, and מגן, *megen*, seems to have been a buckler carried by horsemen of light armour. *And come near to battle:* He then adds, *Bind* or tie *the horses.* The manner of fighting is not the same now as it was formerly; they fought in chariots, as heathen authors abundantly shew. He therefore says, *Tie the horses*, that is, join them together that they may draw the chariots. *Go up, ye horsemen, stand in your helmets, clean your lances, and put on your coats of mail.* The meaning is, that Egyptians would come well prepared with all kinds of arms that they might be formidable to their enemies. And hence the vengeance appeared more clearly, because they had been well furnished, so that they might seem to have gained the victory before they engaged with their enemies. This is the reason why the Prophet enumerates their complete armour, having omitted no material part; he mentions *the lances, the helmets, the coats of mail, the chariots, the horses,* and *the shield*, so that victory, according to the judgment of men, was already theirs. This is the first thing.

But we must observe the design of the Holy Spirit; it was his purpose to remove the vail from the eyes of the faithful, which for the most part prevents us to see as clearly as we ought the power of God; for when we fix our attention on warlike preparations, we do not think that anything is left for God to do; for they who are well prepared seem to be beyond the hazard of losing the day. That the Jews then might know that it would be nothing for God to punish the Egyptians, he records this preparation. And there is a kind of concession when he says, They shall indeed be furnished with a helmet, a coat of mail, a shield, a sword, and a

lance; but all this would avail nothing as to the issue. Then from this prophetic word let us learn, that God makes no account of all those things which men prepare when they wish to effect anything. For smoke is everything that dazzles our eyes; so forces and arms have no importance before God; for by a single blast he can dissipate all such clouds. And this truth is very useful; for we look on external things, and when anything specious presents itself to us, we are immediately taken up with it, and rob God of all power; for we transfer his glory to these masks which appear before us. We now then understand why the Prophet speaks here of bucklers, and shields, and lances, and chariots, and helmets, and coats of mail.

For it immediately follows, *Why*, or how, *have I seen them broken?* Here the Prophet, on the other hand, disregards all the things which he before enumerated in such high terms, for he spoke, as it were, according to the common judgment of men. And, as I have said, he undertook the person of a herald, as though Pharaoh himself had commanded the Egyptians immediately to take up arms. This then was apparently very formidable. But the Prophet now speaks as though standing on an eminence, and says, How or what is this? for מַדּוּעַ, *meduo*, is a particle of wonder, How! He then passes over from the common opinion of the flesh to the prophetic Spirit, as though he had said, "Were any one to judge of the Egyptians by their external splendour, he would say that they would be victorious over their enemies; but were any one to ascend higher and to form a judgment, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, he would see that all this is frail and evanescent."

But the question, *How?* is to be taken as emphatical; for it could have been hardly believed that an army so well equipped could have become a prey to the Babylonians, and that it was hastening to its own ruin. As then this seemed incredible to any one attending to the subject, the Prophet asks, How have I seen them? He however says that he *saw* them, even because God had set him, as we have said, as it were on a watch-tower. This, however, may be applied to the body as well as to the mind. *I saw them turned*

backward, when yet they were rushing forward, as he says afterwards, like a flood. *Their valiant* men, he says, *have been smitten, and by flight they have fled.* He means, in short, that there would not be so much courage in the Egyptians as to withstand the onset of their enemies, because they would be broken down by the hidden power of God. He also adds, that their flight would be accompanied with so much dread, that they would not dare to look behind, so that their danger would increase their haste.

He at length adds in God's name, *Terror on every side, says Jehovah.* Here he changes the person the third time, for he declares as from God's mouth that there would be *terror on every side;* and thus it is an answer to the question, How, or why? even because God, he says, executes his judgment on them. Whenever, therefore, we see that nothing is wanting to our enemies for victory even over the Church of God, let what the Prophet says here be remembered by us, that there is no reason why we should despond, though we may be filled with wonder and amazement; for God will so work as to break down, without the hand of man, those who shake the whole world with terror. It afterwards follows,—

6. Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates.

6. Ne effugiat velox, et ne servetur fortis; in Aquilone (in Septentrione) super ripam fluvii Euphratis impingent (*vel,* impegerunt, *est præteriti temporis,*) et ceciderunt (כשׁל *significat etiam corruere, ideo vertunt alii,* corruerunt, *sed videtur esse species gradationis.*)

He then says first that they would gain power, but he speaks presently of their fall, unless it be thought that the same thing is repeated: and the beginning of the verse may be read affirmatively, "The swift shall not flee," &c. But as the particle אַל, *al,* is often used in a prohibitory sense, the verse may be evidently explained as spoken by God, and thus it may be read in connection with the previous verse, *Let not the swift flee, nor the brave escape.* For God here declares authoritatively, that celerity and courage would be of no avail to the Egyptians, because the swiftest would be taken by their enemies, and the bravest would fall.[1]

[1] It is more consistent with the passage to render the verbs in the future tense,—

He says, *In the land of the north*, on the bank of *the river*. We know that Babylon and Assyria and Chaldea and those countries, were northward with respect to Judea. Whenever then the Prophets speak of the Babylonians, they call them Northlanders; but Egypt was to the south, as it is clear from many parts of Scripture. But as the Prophet here speaks of the Egyptians, he rightly makes Chaldea to be northward. Then he says, *On the bank of the river Euphrates they shall stumble*, or fall. The meaning is, that the event of war is in the power of God, so that he would tear in pieces and lay prostrate or scatter the Egyptians, however well equipped they might be, and trust in their own strength.

We must also observe, that whatever subsidies men procure for themselves in order to protect their safety, they are nothing when God is opposed to them. The Prophet indeed mentions only two things; but he means that though men may excel in many things and possess many endowments, they must yet perish, when that is God's will: flight cannot save the swift, nor strength the valiant. It follows—

7. Who *is* this *that* cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers?

8. Egypt riseth up like a flood, and *his* waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, *and* will cover the earth: I will destroy the city, and the inhabitants thereof.

7. Quis iste tanquam lacus ascendet (*vel*, ascendit, *ad verbum*) tanquam fluvii sese agitant (*aut*, moventur) aquæ ejus?

8. Ægyptus tanquam lacus ascendit (ascendet, *ad verbum, sed significat continuum actum,*) et tanquam fluvii sese movent aquæ: dixit enim, Ascendam et operiam terram; perdam urbem et qui habitant in ea.

The Prophet again meets those doubts which might have possessed the minds of the godly, so as to prevent them to receive this prophecy in faith and with due reverence: for we have said, that when our thoughts are occupied with external things, the power of God is disregarded. When, therefore, we speak of some impregnable kingdom, it does not come into our minds, that all strongholds are of no account with God. It was therefore necessary highly to extol the power of God, when the Prophets spoke of his judgments:

> Not flee shall the swift,
> Nor escape shall the strong;
> In the north, by the side of the river Euphrates,
> Have they stumbled and fallen.—*Ed.*

otherwise the flesh, as we have stated, would have said, "They who are well fortified must be free from evils, and as it were beyond the reach of weapons, and hence there is nothing for them to fear." And it is with this false imagination that the proud deceive themselves, for they set up their forces, their auxiliaries, and all the things which they deem, according to the judgment of the flesh, as sufficient to protect their safety. Thus it happens, that they heedlessly disregard all threatenings, even because they think that the subsidies which they have are so many fortresses against all attacks.

It is for this purpose that the Prophet now says, *Who is this that as a lake rises*, or swells, *as rivers are moved*, or, *whose waters* are agitated? But he speaks according to the common judgment of men, for the very sight could not but fill men with fear; and so the Jews could never have thought that possible which the Prophet here asserts. He then, as it were, introduces them all as anxiously inquiring according to their own judgment, *Who is this?* as though Pharaoh was not a mortal, but something above human. For the drift of the question is this, that Pharaoh was as it were exempted from the common condition of men, because his power increased like a river rising or swelling; and *its waters*, he says, *make a noise.*

Then he adds, *Egypt* is like *rivers* and like a *lake:* it made a noise with its forces, as though a river were rolling along its waters. But all this would be nothing, as he afterwards tells us. He adds, *He hath said, I will ascend, I will cover the land, I will destroy the city*, &c. He puts city in the singular instead of the plural number;[1] *I will destroy cities*, he says, *and all who dwell in them.* He in short sets forth Pharaoh here as one who triumphed before he fought, because he could cover the land with the multitude of his footmen and horsemen. It now follows,—

9. Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the

9. Ascendite equi (*quidam vertunt*, insanite, *sed dura esset metaphora, ideo sim-*

[1] The *city* here is put in opposition to the *land*,—
And it (Egypt) said, I will ascend, I will cover the land;
I will destroy (every) city, and the dwellers in it.

was taken. At the time, then, that the Egyptians were secure, and that the Jews, relying on their aid, thought themselves safe from the violence of Nebuchadnezzar, it was then that this prophecy was delivered. But we see again, that the order of time is not observed as to these prophecies; for he had spoken of the slaughter of the army, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. And it is probable, though the time is not pointed out here, that the destruction of Egypt had then been predicted; for before Jeremiah began to discharge his prophetic office, Isaiah had spoken against Egypt. Ezekiel, also, when an exile in Chaldea, at the same time confirmed the prophecies of Jeremiah, and said many more things against Egypt. We must however remark, that Jeremiah had not once only prophesied of the ruin of Egypt; for after he was forcibly led there, he confirmed, as we have before seen, what he had said previously.

Jeremiah then had predicted what we read here many years before the taking of the city. But as the Jews disregarded what he had said before, he again confirmed it, when he was in Egypt, though it was not without great danger to his life, for he spared neither the king nor the nation.

He then says, that *the word* came to him *respecting the coming of Nebuchadnezzar to smite the land of Egypt.* Hitherto he has spoken of the punishment which God inflicted on the Egyptians, beyond their own kingdom, on the bank of the Euphrates; but now he records the punishment of Egypt itself, when Nebuchadnezzar not only went to meet the Egyptians, to drive them from his own borders, but when he made an irruption into their kingdom, and plundered many cities, and so afflicted the whole kingdom, that the Egyptian king afterwards reigned only, as it were, by his permission. It follows,—

14. Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph, and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee.

14. Annuntiate in Ægypto, et promulgate in Migdol, promulgate in Noph et in Taphnees, dicite, Sta, et para te; quia voravit (*vel*, consumpsit) gladius circuitus tuos.

He pursues the same mode of speaking as we observed yesterday; and the reason was explained, even because, as men are very inattentive to God's judgments, the message

of Jeremiah would have been ineffectual, had he spoken plainly, and in an ordinary way. It was therefore necessary to adopt an elevated style, and to speak, as he does, in a manner striking and forcible. Public speakers affect fine speaking, but only to catch applause, or to fill men with empty fear or joy: but the Prophets had in view another thing, even to teach, to exhort, to reprove, to threaten, in a way calculated to be effectual.

He says, *Declare ye in Egypt*, as though he pronounced a sentence from a tribunal, being endowed with divine authority. He then bids this message to be brought to the Egyptians. He afterwards mentions some cities, *Migdol*, *Noph*, and *Tahpanhes*. Some think Noph to be Alexandria; but it was probably Memphis, and this appears evident from other parts of Scripture. But they are mistaken who think that the same was Migdol, for the Prophet here refers to them as different places. Of Tahpanhes we have spoken elsewhere. Now these were celebrated cities and known to the Jews, as they were not far from them.

We know that Memphis was a renowned city; but this was much more known to the Israelites, for it was not far from their passage from Egypt, as we may learn from the second book of Moses and other parts of Scripture. Then we have seen that the Jews dwelt in Tahpanhes when they became fugitives from their own land, and were received there as guests.

It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, that God was now armed against the Egyptians; but as he was not a teacher set over them, he speaks of them as of foreign nations, *Declare*, he says, *in Egypt*, that is, let the Egyptians know this. *Say, Stand, and prepare thyself, for the sword has devoured thy borders*, and everything around thee. By these words the Prophet intimates, that though the Egyptians, being warned in due time, should exercise vigilance, yet their care would be useless, for they could not prevent God from executing what he had determined. He speaks, however, of what was incredible, for the Egyptians thought themselves far from every danger: hence the Prophet says, that how much soever they might prepare themselves,

what he had said: *The sword*, he says, *shall devour, and shall be satiated and made drunk with their blood.* But at the end of the verse he says, that this would be the righteous judgment of God. For God so extols his own power, that he yet would have himself acknowledged to be just whenever he inflicts punishment on the ungodly; for as his severity often appears extreme, hence the Prophets, when they speak of acts of vengeance which God executes, at the same time adds some testimony as to his judgment being righteous, as in this place, when it is said, that the God of hosts had *a sacrifice.*

By *sacrifice* the Prophet means, that the slaughter would be free from every stain; for it is the same thing as though he had said, "God will be glorified in that slaughter, when all the Egyptians shall be destroyed." For why do we offer sacrifices to God except that his glory may be proclaimed, that he is just as well as merciful, and almighty, and the fountain of all wisdom and uprightness? We hence see the purpose for which the word sacrifice is used, even that none should dare to blame that slaughter, as though God were too rigid and exceeded the limits of justice in shedding that blood. He then says that all the slaughters would be as so many sacrifices, in which God's justice as well as his power would shine forth. He again points out the place, the land of the north, nigh Euphrates, in order that more credit and certainty might be given to the prophecy. It now follows,—

11. Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; *for* thou shalt not be cured.	11. Ascende in Guilead, et sume resinam virgo filia Ægypti; frustra multiplicas medicamina; sanitas nulla tibi.

The Prophet adds here nothing new, but confirms by another metaphor what he had said before. He then says, that the slaughter would be like a fatal plague, as though God would take away from the Egyptians every hope. We indeed know that the kingdom of Egypt did not then perish; for the nation itself remained. But the kingdom was so depressed, that, as it was stated yesterday, they kept themselves as shut up within their own borders, and did not afterwards bring out their forces. And yet it is well known how great was the pride and audacity of that nation; but

bouring nations. When, therefore, they came to Pharaoh, they thought that they were coming to some sort of a god. The Prophet derided that foolish confidence unreasonably entertained, and says, "They shall cry there, O Pharaoh, magnificent king, thou art now a king of tumult," or confusion.

What follows is not well explained, as I think, by interpreters; for they all, with one consent, think that Pharaoh is derided, because he delayed time, after having before said that he would go against Nebuchadnezzar; as earthly kings, when they think themselves sufficiently prepared, do not wait until the enemy is at hand, or finds them at home, but go to meet him at a distance. Others think that the time for war had been proclaimed, as it was usual formerly for both sides to proclaim a certain day on which they were to come to a conflict. But from the last verse we may gather that the Prophet meant another thing. He then derides, if I am not mistaken, the folly of Pharaoh for another reason, even because he thought that those threatenings were vain and empty, which had been dispersed by the Jews; for the Egyptians were not ignorant of what had been predicted by the Prophets. Isaiah had long before cried out against the Jews, because they made treaties with the Egyptians, and fled there for aid. There is no doubt but the courtiers, in order to gain favour, said to them, "Behold, our Prophets hinder us as much as they can, and we must take care lest they turn aside the people: while then there is time, let us make the treaty, which will be useful to you as well as to us." As, then, the destruction of Egypt had been predicted many years before, and as the Egyptians remained in safety after Judea was overthrown and laid waste, it is probable that they became more hardened, thinking that the time had elapsed. And this view, as I have said, is confirmed by the context. For it follows,—

18. *As* I live, saith the King, whose name *is* The Lord of hosts, Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, *so* shall he come.

18. Vivo ego, dicit rex (cui nomen est rex) Jehova exercituum, quoniam sicut Thabor in montibus, et sicut Carmelus in mari, veniet.

Why did the Prophet say this, except that the Egyptians thought they had escaped, because the time had been de-

would take possession of all that part of Asia which the Egyptians had occupied, even as far as Pelusium, to the very borders of the Nile. He at length adds,—

12. The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, *and* they are fallen both together.

12. Audierunt gentes opprobrium tuum, et clamore tuo repleta est terra; quia fortis contra fortem impegit, et simul ceciderunt ambo.

He concludes this prophecy by saying that the report of this slaughter would be everywhere known among all nations. Had the Egyptians sustained only a small loss, the thing might have been unknown, as when a small engagement takes place the report does not spread far and wide; but when by one battle a nation is so conquered that a remarkable change follows, the event then is proclaimed everywhere. The Prophet then intimates by these words, that the stroke of Egypt would not be common, as also he said before, because the report would fly through all nations.

Heard then *have all nations of thy reproach*, even that the Egyptians had, to their great disgrace, been conquered by the Chaldeans, and that they had not only been put to flight, but that the greatest part of them had been slain, so that the kingdom of Egypt had been nearly lost; that at least they had been reduced to such straits, that they lost their chief cities and a very wide country, even throughout Asia to the river Euphrates.

He says that *the land was filled with their cry:* by voice or cry he means lamentations. Then he adds, *Because the valiant hath stumbled against the valiant.* This may be thus explained, "The valiant hath contended with the valiant;" but that the Chaldean proved stronger than the Egyptian: but I prefer to apply this to the Egyptians; and this may be inferred from the end of the verse, where he says, that *both fell.* So the Prophet means that the multitude, in which the Egyptians gloried, would be a hinderance to them, as usually is the case, when the army is too crowded, for the larger and the more numerous the army is, the greater is the disorder and confusion. When an army is small, they can by degrees recede, or stand still, until they take flight in safety: but in a great multitude there is also great

bouring nations. When, therefore, they came to Pharaoh, they thought that they were coming to some sort of a god. The Prophet derided that foolish confidence unreasonably entertained, and says, "They shall cry there, O Pharaoh, magnificent king, thou art now a king of tumult," or confusion.

What follows is not well explained, as I think, by interpreters; for they all, with one consent, think that Pharaoh is derided, because he delayed time, after having before said that he would go against Nebuchadnezzar; as earthly kings, when they think themselves sufficiently prepar , do not wait until the enemy is at hand, or finds them at l go to meet him at a distance. Others think tl for war had been proclaimed, as it was usual both sides to proclaim a certain day on which t come to a conflict. But from the last verse we k that the Prophet meant another thing. He t if I am not mistaken, the folly of Pharaoh f reason, even because he thought that those th were vain and empty, which had been di Jews; for the Egyptians were not ignorant of wl predicted by the Prophets. Isaiah had long out against the Jews, because they made treal Egyptians, and fled there for aid. There is no the courtiers, in order to gain favour, said to them, " our Prophets hinder us as much as they can, and take care lest they turn aside the people: while t is time, let us make the treaty, which will be useful well as to us." As, then, the destruction of Egypt predicted many years before, and as the Egyptians re in safety after Judea was overthrown and laid w probable that they became more hardened, thinkii t time had elapsed. And this view, as I have a, is co firmed by the context. For it follows,—

18. *As* I live, saith the King, whose name *is* The Lord of hosts, Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, *so* shall he come.

18. Vivo ego, dicit rex (cui nomen est rex) Jehova exercituum, quoniam sicut Thabor in montibus, et sicut Carmelus in mari, veniet.

Why did the Prophet say this, except that the Egyptians thought they had escaped, because the time had been de-

was taken. At the time, then, that the Egyptians were secure, and that the Jews, relying on their aid, thought themselves safe from the violence of Nebuchadnezzar, it was then that this prophecy was delivered. But we see again, that the order of time is not observed as to these prophecies; for he had spoken of the slaughter of the army, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. And it is probable, though the time is not pointed out here, that the destruction of Egypt had then been predicted; for before Jeremiah began to discharge his prophetic office, Isaiah had spoken against Egypt. Ezekiel, also, when an exile in Chaldea, at the same time confirmed the prophecies of Jeremiah, and said many more things against Egypt. We must however remark, that Jeremiah had not once only prophesied of the ruin of Egypt; for after he was forcibly led there, he confirmed, as we have before seen, what he had said previously.

Jeremiah then had predicted what we read here many years before the taking of the city. But as the Jews disregarded what he had said before, he again confirmed it, when he was in Egypt, though it was not without great danger to his life, for he spared neither the king nor the nation.

He then says, that *the word* came to him *respecting the coming of Nebuchadnezzar to smite the land of Egypt.* Hitherto he has spoken of the punishment which God inflicted on the Egyptians, beyond their own kingdom, on the bank of the Euphrates; but now he records the punishment of Egypt itself, when Nebuchadnezzar not only went to meet the Egyptians, to drive them from his own borders, but when he made an irruption into their kingdom, and plundered many cities, and so afflicted the whole kingdom, that the Egyptian king afterwards reigned only, as it were, by his permission. It follows,—

14. Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph, and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee.

14. Annuntiate in *Ægypto*, et promulgate in Migdol, promulgate in Noph et in Taphnees, dicite, Sta, et para te; quia voravit (*vel*, consumpsit) gladius circuitus tuos.

He pursues the same mode of speaking as we observed yesterday; and the reason was explained, even because, as men are very inattentive to God's judgments, the message

of Jeremiah would have been ineffectual, had he spoken plainly, and in an ordinary way. It was therefore necessary to adopt an elevated style, and to speak, as he does, in a manner striking and forcible. Public speakers affect fine speaking, but only to catch applause, or to fill men with empty fear or joy: but the Prophets had in view another thing, even to teach, to exhort, to reprove, to threaten, in a way calculated to be effectual.

He says, *Declare ye in Egypt*, as though he pronounced a sentence from a tribunal, being endowed with divine authority. He then bids this message to be brought to the Egyptians. He afterwards mentions some cities, *Migdol*, *Noph*, and *Tahpanhes*. Some think Noph to be Alexandria; but it was probably Memphis, and this appears evident from other parts of Scripture. But they are mistaken who think that the same was Migdol, for the Prophet here refers to them as different places. Of Tahpanhes we have spoken elsewhere. Now these were celebrated cities and known to the Jews, as they were not far from them.

We know that Memphis was a renowned city; but this was much more known to the Israelites, for it was not far from their passage from Egypt, as we may learn from the second book of Moses and other parts of Scripture. Then we have seen that the Jews dwelt in Tahpanhes when they became fugitives from their own land, and were received there as guests.

It is then the same as though the Prophet had said, that God was now armed against the Egyptians; but as he was not a teacher set over them, he speaks of them as of foreign nations, *Declare*, he says, *in Egypt*, that is, let the Egyptians know this. *Say, Stand, and prepare thyself, for the sword has devoured thy borders*, and everything around thee. By these words the Prophet intimates, that though the Egyptians, being warned in due time, should exercise vigilance, yet their care would be useless, for they could not prevent God from executing what he had determined. He speaks, however, of what was incredible, for the Egyptians thought themselves far from every danger: hence the Prophet says, that how much soever they might prepare themselves,

yet it would all be in vain. He then derides their security, because they thought themselves beyond the reach of danger. It follows—

15. Why are thy valiant men swept away? they stood not, because the Lord did drive them.

15. Quomodo dispersus est fortis tuus (*ad verbum*, fortes tui, *est mutatio* numeri,) non stabit (*vel*, non stetit,) quia Jehova impulit eum (*iterum mutatur munerus, designat enim fortes tuos.*)

By these words the Prophet expresses more clearly what I have just referred to, that the Egyptians would not be able to resist, though they might have gathered auxiliaries on every side, because God would carry on war against them. In astonishment he asks, "How has it happened, or, how is it, that thy *valiant men have been thus scattered?*" The verb, indeed, means to sweep, but here it means to scatter. He immediately answers, *Because God has driven them, they could not stand.* The reason for such a question we explained yesterday, even because the unbelieving regarded as a fable whatever they heard from the Prophets; and as long as things went on prosperously, they slept, in a manner, over their good fortune, and became inebriated with it, so that they feared nothing, and did not think themselves exposed to any adversities. As then ungodly men proudly disregarded God, the Prophets, appealing to common sense, asked them, *How comes this?* For Jeremiah spoke of things as yet hidden, and which had not fallen under the observation of men. We hence see why this wonder was expressed, *How have thy valiant fallen?* Then he says, *Because Jehovah has driven them, they could not stand.*

Here, again, we must bear in mind, what we briefly referred to yesterday, that ungodly men deceive themselves by a false confidence, when they set up in opposition to God's power their earthly helps and subsidies, and think that they are well secured when they possess many forces and strongholds, and when they can procure auxiliaries for themselves from every quarter. Let us know that nothing is more fatal than to confide in earthly helps, when God declares that he is our adversary. Hence the Prophet says, that they did not stand, *because Jehovah drove them;* as though he had said, that Egyptians would have to do not only with the

king of Babylon, but with God himself, whom they had provoked. It follows,—

16. He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another; and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword.

16. Multiplicavit, impingent, etiam cecidit quisque in socium suum; et dixerunt, surge et revertamur ad populum nostrum, et ad terram nativitatis nostræ a facie gladii populantis.

Brevity of expression renders this sentence obscure or ambiguous. The verb הִרְבָּה, *erebe*, is put without a nominative case; but it is to be applied to God. God, then, has *multiplied*. And then there is a change of number, for the singular is to be taken as a plural when he says, *he falls*, כּוֹשֵׁל, *cushil:* the meaning is, that many would stumble, because God would drive them, as it was said in the last verse. Hence comes what immediately follows, *Even fall shall every one on his friend*, that is, before the enemy smote them; by crowding together they would of themselves dash one against another, so that each would fall by the pushing of his associate.

He afterwards adds, *And they shall say, Rise*. Here he speaks not of natives. Some think that the reference is to foreigners, who had come into Egypt on account of the fruitfulness of the land; for a dwelling in Egypt, which we know was very fertile and full of all abundance, was especially advantageous to them. As, then, Egypt had in it many strangers and sojourners, some interpreters think that the Prophet here speaks of them, as though he had said, "They who came into Egypt to live well there through the affluence of all good things, shall find nothing better for them than to flee away:" *They shall* then *say, Rise;* that is, every one will exhort one another, and say, *Let us go into the land of our nativity*, that is, "Let us be satisfied with our own native soil; for the very richness of Egypt will prove fatal to us if we remain in it." But I rather think that the Prophet refers to the hired soldiers. We saw yesterday that when Pharaoh carried on war on the banks of Euphrates, he had with him Ethiopians, and Lydians, and many from Lybia, and we shall see again presently that there were hired soldiers in Egypt when Nebuchadnezzar conquered it.

It was then very suitable for the Prophet to mention these foreign soldiers whom Pharaoh had hired; for at the beginning of the verse he said, *Every one shall stumble on his neighbour*, and then it follows, *And they shall say, Let us return to our own people and to the land of our nativity.* When he says, *Every one shall stumble on his neighbour*, he means, no doubt, those valiant men, called to defend Egypt; of the same also he speaks when he says, *Rise, let us return to the land of our nativity.*

He says, *From the face of the devastating sword.* The word הַיּוֹנָה, *eiune*, is derived by some from יַיִן, *iin*, wine; and they give this explanation, "from the inebriated sword." *Jerome* renders the word "Dove," but without reason. He then calls the sword wasting or destroying, which had already been inebriated with much blood, and which had done many slaughters. By the sword, he means that of the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar. Some render the words, "saddening sword," but this rendering appears to me unmeaning. They then say, "As we have been already broken down, and see our enemies committing slaughters with impunity, and kill all who meet them, nothing is better for us than to return to our own land." It follows,—

17. They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt *is but* a noise; he hath passed the time appointed.	17. Clamarunt illic, Pharao rex Ægypti perturbationis, præteriit tempus statutum (*vel*, condictum.)

This verse ought to be joined with the preceding, for he refers to the cries of the soldiers who had been deceived by their own hopes: they at length *cried, Pharaoh is to us a king of confusion.* The Prophet predicts what was to be; but he speaks, according to what was usually done, in the past time; for the Prophets announce unknown things as before their eyes, in order to gain credit to their prophecies. He then says, that there would be a cry among the soldiers, *Pharaoh the king of Egypt is a king of confusion;* for the word שָׁאוֹן, *shaun*, is to be read in the genitive case; as though the Prophet had said that the soldiers would really find that Pharaoh would not turn out according to his boasting. The name of Egypt first filled him and the whole nation with arrogance; and further, it was dreaded by the neigh-

bouring nations. When, therefore, they came to Pharaoh, they thought that they were coming to some sort of a god. The Prophet derided that foolish confidence unreasonably entertained, and says, "They shall cry there, O Pharaoh, magnificent king, thou art now a king of tumult," or confusion.

What follows is not well explained, as I think, by interpreters; for they all, with one consent, think that Pharaoh is derided, because he delayed time, after having before said that he would go against Nebuchadnezzar; as earthly kings, when they think themselves sufficiently prepared, do not wait until the enemy is at hand, or finds them at home, but go to meet him at a distance. Others think that the time for war had been proclaimed, as it was usual formerly for both sides to proclaim a certain day on which they were to come to a conflict. But from the last verse we may gather that the Prophet meant another thing. He then derides, if I am not mistaken, the folly of Pharaoh for another reason, even because he thought that those threatenings were vain and empty, which had been dispersed by the Jews; for the Egyptians were not ignorant of what had been predicted by the Prophets. Isaiah had long before cried out against the Jews, because they made treaties with the Egyptians, and fled there for aid. There is no doubt but the courtiers, in order to gain favour, said to them, "Behold, our Prophets hinder us as much as they can, and we must take care lest they turn aside the people: while then there is time, let us make the treaty, which will be useful to you as well as to us." As, then, the destruction of Egypt had been predicted many years before, and as the Egyptians remained in safety after Judea was overthrown and laid waste, it is probable that they became more hardened, thinking that the time had elapsed. And this view, as I have said, is confirmed by the context. For it follows,—

18. *As* I live, saith the King, whose name *is* The Lord of hosts, Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, *so* shall he come.

18. Vivo ego, dicit rex (cui nomen est rex) Jehova exercituum, quoniam sicut Thabor in montibus, et sicut Carmelus in mari, veniet.

Why did the Prophet say this, except that the Egyptians thought they had escaped, because the time had been de-

layed? As, then, the length of time had deceived them, thinking, as they did, that God had told what was false, or that he had forgotten what he had predicted by his Prophets, he says, *I live, saith Jehovah*, that is, by my life; for God here swears by his life, that what he now declares would come. This seems to be the true meaning. Nor did the Prophet speak thus only for the sake of the Egyptians, but also for the sake of the Jews; for we know that it was usual and common with them proudly to assert that what the Prophets had spoken from God's mouth was all vain: hence that proverbial saying, "To-morrow we shall die, let us eat and drink." (Is. xxii. 13.) They also called the prophecies burdens, by way of reproach and contempt. As the ungodly promised themselves impunity through God's forbearance, it was necessary to testify to them what we here read, even that whatever God had threatened would come to pass, though he delayed it for a time. For he suspends his punishment, but his vengeance at length breaks out, when the unbelieving think that all things will turn out prosperously; yea, when they say, "Peace and security, then sudden destruction overtakes them." (1 Thess. v. 3.) By the word מְאֹד, *muod*, then, the Prophets mean a fixed time, not that they had pointed out a certain day, but that they had spoken of the destruction of Egypt, as though God had already gone forth as the judge.

As, then, they said that the time had passed by, God here swears by his life; and hence he says, *whose name is King, Jehovah of hosts.* God here sets forth his own greatness in opposition to the power of Pharaoh and of all other kings; for prosperity commonly brings pride with it, and those who excel in dignity and power become self-willed and insolent. Hence to repress this haughty insolence, he says, that the name of King, the God of hosts, belongs not properly to any but to himself alone.

It shall come, he says, *as Tabor is in the mountains, and Carmel in the sea.* Their exposition is not suitable who say, "As wild beasts fleeing from hunters, pass over from neighbouring mountains to Mount Tabor, and as trees cut on Carmel are carried to the sea." This is an extremely

forced explanation, and cannot be adapted to the present passage. For what is the design of the Prophet? even to shew that what he had just declared would be immutable, and so fixed that it could not be reversed, that though the whole world attempted to frustrate what God had decreed, yet nothing could be done. Then he says, *As Tabor is in the mountains*, that is, As Mount Tabor is surrounded by other mountains, and has there its deep roots, so that it cannot be torn up; and *as Carmel is in the sea*. Now this Carmel was not understood by the Jews to have been that mount where Nabal dwelt, but a mountain not far from Ptolemais, and it was girded and washed by the sea: hence he says, *As Carmel is a mountain in the sea*. Tabor as well as Carmel remain fixed, and cannot be transferred to another place; so he says, shall this prophecy come to pass; it is valid and shall be accomplished; as though he had said, "This immutable decree cannot be refixed, as Carmel cannot be moved, nor Tabor, so as to be transplanted elsewhere." It now follows,—

19. O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into captivity: for Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant.

19. Vasa migrationis fac (*vel*, para) tibi habitatrix Ægypti; quia Noph (*id est*, Memphis,) in solitudinem erit, et vastabitur, ut non sit habitator.

The Prophet exults over the Egyptians, in order that he might more and more confirm his doctrine; for we have said, and experience teaches the same, that the unbelieving are but little moved when God summons them to his tribunal, and gives evidence of his vengeance; for they remain stupid, except their torpor is by force shaken from them. This is the reason why the Prophet sharply assails the wicked, even that they might awake from their drowsiness.

Hence he says, *Take to thee the furniture of transmigration*, that is, prepare for thyself garments and other things for the purpose of removing. The Egyptians, having a fruitful land, remained quietly in their own country, and led, as it were, a sedentary life. Now the Prophet intimates that they were to move elsewhere; and he bids them to prepare for a long journey, or a long peregrination: *Make to thee*, then, *furniture for transmigration; for Memphis shall be reduced to solitude, and laid waste without an inhabitant.*

He mentions Memphis again, which, as we have said, was a very celebrated city and a royal residence. He says that it would be laid waste, and yet we know that the Pyramids there were reckoned among the wonders of the world. The city was populous, and had many advantages. The Prophet dooms it to desolation. If, then, such solitude awaited the most celebrated city, what was to become of the smaller towns? what was to become of the villages? We now, then, see what was the purpose of the Prophet, even to shew, that when Nebuchadnezzar made an irruption into Egypt, all things would be under his power, so that he would, at his pleasure, seize on, plunder, and lay waste the whole land. It now follows,—

20. Egypt *is like* a very fair heifer, *but* destruction cometh; it cometh out of the north.

20. Vitula formosa Ægyptus, afflictio ab aquilone venit, venit.

Jeremiah intimates here, that though Egypt indulged in pleasures, it could not yet escape the vengeance of God. We reminded you yesterday why the Prophets mentioned the wealth, the riches, and the power of the ungodly, even because they are blinded by all the good things in which they abound; for they fear nothing, nor feel any anxiety, but through a false notion they exempt themselves from every evil. As, then, the unbelieving are thus presumptuous and proud, the Prophets, on the other hand, warn them and say, that however they may exult in their own strength and defences, they would yet, when it pleased God to make them a prey, become the most miserable of all.

The Prophet, then, in short, takes away the false conceit of the Jews, as well as of the Egyptians; as though he had said, "The Egyptians trust in their prosperity, even as though they were like a heifer frisking in the fields; but *calamity*," he says, "is coming, is coming from the north." He repeats the same word, in order to remove every doubt: *coming*, then, *is distress, it is coming from the north*, that is, from the Babylonians, who were situated northward to Judea, as we stated yesterday.

21. Also her hired men *are* in the midst of her like fatted bullocks; for

21. Etiam mercenarii ejus in medio ejus tanquam vituli saginati,

they also are turned back, *and* are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, *and* the time of their visitation.

quia etiam ipsi vertent terga, fugient simul, non steterunt, quia dies calamitatis (*vel*, miseriæ) venit super eos, tempus visitationis ipsorum.

Here the Prophet represents the mercenaries of Egypt, as we have already said, as being foreign soldiers, who had been hired here and there, and from far countries, such as Lydia was. It may yet have been, that there were not many at that time who had come from beyond the sea to the Egyptians; but they had the Ethiopians, for Ezekiel says that many came from Cush, that is, Ethiopia; and then they had some from Lybia and the neighbouring countries. Then Jeremiah includes them under one name, and says that they were *mercenaries*. Now, they who hire themselves seem to be more warlike than others; for they who defend their own country do this from necessity; but those who of themselves seek war, and depart from their own borders for the purpose of engaging in war, seem to be men fit for any bold undertaking.

But the Prophet says, *also*, גַּם, *gam*, *also mercenaries;* that is, not only the Egyptians were accustomed to a delicate and indulgent life, but also the Ethiopians and others who had been hired, *They are also in the midst of it as fatted bullocks*, that is, they fill themselves with the abundance of Egypt; and hence it was that they became a prey to their enemies; for we know that nothing is more injurious to soldiers than to live delicately and luxuriously. Of all ancient generals, the most celebrated is Hannibal; but how did it happen, that having an invincible army, by which he had terrified all Italy, he afterwards fell? because Campania, with its luxuries, enervated him, for he lived there not like a soldier, but had tables richly furnished for himself and for his army. Hence it was, that they were no more what they had been. So also the Prophet says, "Egypt will ruin its hired soldiers; for she will satiate them with luxuries." What did at length happen to them? he compares them to bullocks of the stall, מַרְבֵּק, *merebec;* some read bullocks of the pasture, but not correctly; for רְבֵק, *rebec*, is properly to fatten. He then calls them the bullocks of the stall, which

[illegible] fit and be soon slaughtered. [illegible] their backs; and then [illegible] because the time of calamity is [illegible] I cannot finish this subject now.

PRAYER.

[illegible] that when thou indulgest us, we may not [illegible] in prosperity, but learn [illegible] of our own accord, that we may obey thee [illegible] course of our life, and mortify our flesh, lest [illegible] by pride and false confidence, but so live in thy fear [illegible] thee when we regard thee as the righteous Judge [illegible] at the same time on thee, when we [illegible] Father, as thou hast been pleased to [illegible] Son our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-Seventh.

[illegible]

22. Vox ejus tanquam serpentis incedet, quia in potentia incedent; et cum securibus venient contra eam, sicuti cæsores lignorum.

To study elegance was not so much the object of the Prophet, as to confirm what he had taught. The figures, then, which he now uses, were not intended as ornaments of speech, but rather for the purpose of giving force and power to what he had said: for, as it has been said, prophecies had no credit with stupid men, unless stimulants were added to them.

He says now, that the *voice of Egypt would go forth like that of a serpent*: some read, "as though it were a serpent;" but I prefer to render it in the genitive case, and it is more suitable: for the Prophet means that the complaints of Egypt would not be obstreperous: as serpents, in creeping, send forth their hisses, so he intimates that the Egyptians, being overthrown, would be so broken down, as not to dare to utter open complaints, as those who freely cry out, but such as would remain alive would be so smitten with fear as only to mutter, as it has been said of serpents, who hiss as they creep. We now understand the real meaning of the Pro-

phet: he says that the Egyptians would be so cast down as not to dare openly to complain of their miseries, for they would only mutter, not otherwise than serpents who, on the ground, indistinctly hiss: *Its voice*, then, *shall advance*, or go forth, *like that of a serpent;* and thus he points out their uneasiness, for they would seek hiding-places, and flee here and there, and never dare to remain in the same place. It is, indeed, a proof of the most miserable trepidation, when he who succumbs under his evils finds no place to set his foot on, but is forced, like serpents, to wander here and there. *Jerome's* rendering is, "as that of brass," as though it was written, נחשת, *nuchashet;* but I have already shewn what the Prophet meant.

He adds, *For they shall come with an army*, or with power. The word חיל, *chil*, means both. He now speaks of the Chaldeans. He said that the Egyptians would tremble, and be so broken down, as not to dare to utter their groans openly. Now follows the reason, because the Chaldeans would *come with power*, or with an army; they would come not only as soldiers to fight, but also as *hewers of wood* with their *axes*. He intimates that the issue of the war would by no means be doubtful, but that the Chaldeans would come into Egypt as hired men come to cut down trees. Soldiers are, indeed, armed with swords and lances; for they have to do with enemies, nor can they overcome without danger, at least they cannot conquer without striving; but the Prophet says that the Chaldeans would be so filled with confidence, that they would not regard the Egyptians as enemies, for they would come, as it were, to cut down trees which offer no resistance: *They shall come*, then, *as hewers of wood*. There is here an implied contrast between swords, lances, and axes, as there is between soldiers and hewers of wood. It follows,—

23. They shall cut down her forest, saith the Lord, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and *are* innumerable.

23. Exciderunt sylvam ejus, dicit Jehova, quia non investigabitur, quia multiplicati sunt præ locusta (plusquam locustæ) et non illis numerus.

He goes on here with the same subject. He indeed uses the past tense, but we know that this was commonly done

by the Prophets. He compares the people of Egypt to a forest, as he had said that individual men would be like trees: *They have* then *cut down*, that is, *they* shall cut down *its forest, saith Jehovah.* For the sake of confirmation he ascribes the words to God; as though he had said, that he predicted nothing but what God had determined to do. His object then was to remove every doubt; because the Jews might on the one hand have refused to believe this prophecy on considering the power of Egypt; and the Egyptians on the other might have disregarded these threatenings, confiding in their own strength. Hence the Prophet introduces God as the speaker, as though he had said, "This decree cannot be revoked, because God hath spoken."

And he says, that they had *multiplied more than locusts, so there could be no number.* I have omitted one previous sentence, *It shall not be searched.* As the particle כִּי, *ki*, is read twice, some think that both clauses refer to the Chaldeans. Others read, "It shall not be numbered;" but the verb חָקַר, *chekor*, properly means to inquire, to investigate; and the sentence may be thus suitably rendered, "That the forest may not be investigated." Yet another meaning has been more approved, that the Chaldeans shall not be numbered. If this view be received, there is a change of number, for it immediately follows, "They shall multiply," רָבוּ, *rebu*; and then, *there shall not be a number to them,* לָהֶם, *laem.* But what I stated in the first place, as it appears to me, does not ill suit the passage, that is, that there would be no investigation of the forest of Egypt, that is, of the people; for when a forest is cut down, it appears a naked plain, nor can the place of any tree be pointed out. As to the general meaning, there is not much difference. The Prophet, in short, means, that the slaughter, of which he prophecies, would be so great, that Egypt would be reduced to a waste, because the Chaldeans would come with a numerous army: and he sets up this number in opposition to the Egyptian forces, that they might know that their enemies would be far superior to them. It follows—

24. The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded: she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north.

24. Pudefacta est filia Ægypti, tradita in manum populi Aquilonis.

He says that *Egypt* would be *ashamed*, because it would be brought into the greatest disgrace, for their enemies would treat them reproachfully. By the *people of the north* he means the Chaldeans, as in many other places; for Babylon was northward of Egypt. He intimates, in short, that the Chaldeans would be proud conquerors, so that they would in a reproachful manner oppress the Egyptians, after having conquered them. It is no wonder that the same thing is often repeated by the Prophet, because the thing was incredible at that time, as we have before said. As then it was difficult to make the Jews believe, that the Chaldeans would become victorious over that nation and land, Jeremiah confirms at large the same thing, for he resolutely struggled with the obstinate unbelief of the people. Let us proceed,—

25. The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saith, Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and *all* them that trust in him:

25. Dicit Jehova exercituum, Deus Israel, Ecce ego visito super multitudinem quæ ab Alexandria, et super Pharaonem, et super Ægyptum, et super deos ejus, et super reges ejus, et super Pharaonem, et super eos, qui confidunt in ipso.

The Prophet speaks again in God's name, and sets God's glory in opposition to the perverseness of his own nation; for, as it has been said, he effected but little when he threatened the Egyptians. For the Jews, believing that land to be impregnable, were secure; because they thought that the Egyptians would come to their aid, and so they believed that they were fortified against any hostile power. As then the Jews were inebriated with this false confidence, the Prophet was constrained, not only with many words to enlarge on this subject, but also to introduce God as the judge.

He then does not speak here in his own words, but says, *Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, hath spoken, Behold I*, &c. It was a form of speaking much more forcible than if the Prophet had repeated in his own name what God had committed to him; and yet the Jews were not moved: but still this mode of speaking was calculated to break down their obduracy. He then says, *Behold, I will visit the multitude*, &c. The word אמון, *amun*, is to be taken here for המון,

emun; א, *aleph,* is put for ה, *he;* though some render it "king," but improperly: *I will visit the multitude which is from Alexandria.* We know that this was a celebrated city of Egypt, though it had not yet this name; for Alexander was not born, who called it by his own name; but it had its old name נא, *na,* and it was so called by the Hebrews. In after time it was called Alexandria, its name having been changed.

But there is here a statement of a part for the whole, for the Prophet included the whole of Egypt; what is general is comprehended under what is particular; for God spared not the other cities of Egypt; and it appears from the context that the prophecy extended to all parts of that land, not one angle, even the least, being excepted. But as Alexandria might have remained safe, while the other cities were destroyed, it is here especially mentioned, as though he had said, that nothing would be safe in Egypt. *Behold,* he says, *I will visit the multitude,* &c. It was a very populous city, as we gather from heathen writers; and hence it was that it was full of pride, for they thought it sufficiently safe when they had as it were a proportionate army. But the Prophet derides this vain glory, and says that the vast number of people in Alexandria would avail nothing to prevent the Chaldeans to take possession of it.

I will visit, he says, the whole people, and then *Pharaoh and Egypt.* We now clearly see that the city named was the chief city, and that its multitude was expressly mentioned, that the Egyptians might know, that they could not escape destruction, because they had war with God, and not with men; for as long as they looked on the Chaldeans alone, they remained secure. But the Prophet awakens them from their lethargy, and says, that they were not to look on what the Chaldeans of themselves could do, for they would carry on war under the banner of God, and under his guidance would, without any difficulty, penetrate through the whole of Egypt. Hence he says, I will visit *Pharaoh and Egypt.*

He adds, *and her gods.* We know that that land was very much given to superstitions, that the Egyptians had imbibed gross and shameful errors, though otherwise remarkable for

their wisdom and knowledge. But God had smitten them with madness, so that they were become almost like brute beasts. Besides, as they thought that they had perfect safety in their idols, the Prophet shakes off this confidence, and declares that God would not only be the judge of men but also of the idols. For we know that men strengthen themselves against God's threatenings either by superstition or by confidence in their own strength: as long as they depend on the world, they gather from all quarters some grounds of hope; and hence it is, that they think that they will be safe though in opposition to God's will. The Prophet beats down this folly when he says, *Behold, I will visit the multitude of Alexandria*, and adds, *I will visit the gods* of Egypt. As the unbelieving, when they find earthly aids not sufficient for them, flee to God, but not in the right way, for they become vain in their foolish thoughts; hence is the reason why the Prophet threatens the idols of Egypt.

He adds, *her kings*. There was indeed but one king in Egypt, why then does he mention kings? This may be explained of successors; but I prefer taking "kings" here as meaning the satraps and princes, for we know that the kingdom was very opulent, that it had many equal to kings. I therefore think that the Prophet adorned the princes and satraps of Egypt with this high title; and he confirms this opinion by what immediately follows, even *Pharaoh and those who trust in him*. He repeats the name of Pharaoh, and when he says that he would visit those who trust in him, I doubt not but that the Prophet points out those whom he had before designated "kings." We now then perceive the real meaning, that though Pharaoh had many defences, being strengthened by a great multitude of men, and had also mighty satraps, yet all this would prove fading and evanescent, when he would have to carry on war with God: and God declares here that he would be the general of the whole war, guiding and directing the Chaldeans. It now follows,—

26. And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of

26. Et dabo illos in manum quærentium animam ipsorum, et in manum Nabuchadnezer

[illegible] the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited as in the days of old, saith the Lord.

regis Babylonis, et in manum servorum ejus, et postea habitabitur sicut diebus antiquis, dicit Jehova.

Jeremiah pursues the same subject, and continues to speak in God's name, that he might more powerfully impress minds otherwise tardy: *I will give them,* he says, *into the hand of enemies,* and these deadly enemies; for we have said elsewhere that to "seek life" is not to spare it. Express, then, here is the cruelty of the Chaldean army, as though he had said that they would be deadly enemies to the Egyptians. And he explains himself more fully, and says, *into the hand of the king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants,* so that not only Nebuchadnezzar was to be victorious over Egypt, but also his servants, which was still more threatening.

A promise is at length added, not to shew favour to that wicked nation, but that God might shew that he would be so far merciful towards the Egyptians as not wholly to destroy them. *It shall be inhabited,* he says, *as in ancient days.* Ezekiel says that the kingdom would be small and humble or abject. (Ezek. xxix. 14, 15.) But our Prophet seems to promise to Egypt the same prosperity as it had before its overthrow. We have already said that restoration was promised to the Egyptians, not because God was pacified towards them, but because his purpose was that his mercy should be made evident in the judgments he executed even on foreign nations: and further, it served to confirm prophecy, when to Egypt, after having been destroyed, was granted that restoration of which Jeremiah had prophesied. The truth, then, of what the Prophet had said became more evident through the two changes, than if he had only said, "God shall destroy Egypt." We now, then, perceive why the Prophet spoke of the future condition of Egypt. It follows,—

27. But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity;

27. Et tu ne timeas, serve mi Jacob, et ne expaveseas (*vel*, frangaris animo, חתת *significat conteri et frangi, sed magis refertur ad animum metaphorice*, ne *ergo* frangaris animo,) Israel; quia ecce ego servo te a longinquo, et semen tuum e terra captivitatis

and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make *him* afraid.

ipsorum; et revertetur Jacob et quiescet et securus erit, et nemo exterrebit (nemo qui exterreat, *ad verbum*.)

The Prophet now directs his discourse to the Israelites; for we have already said that he was not appointed a teacher to heathen nations. Whatever, then, he spoke of heathen nations had a reference to the benefit of his people; and for this purpose, as we have said, the Prophets extended their prophecies respecting God's judgments to all nations; for otherwise the Israelites would have been disheartened, as though their condition was worse than that of others: "What can this mean? God has chosen us as his peculiar people; in the meantime we alone are miserable: God pours forth on us his whole rigour, and yet he spares the unbelieving. It would have been better for us to have been rejected wholly by him, for the covenant which he has made with us only renders us more miserable than others." Thus the miserable Israelites might have rushed headlong into despair, had nothing been done in time to relieve them. And then the Prophets, or rather the Spirit of God who spoke by them, regarded another thing; for if nothing had been predicted they would have passed by, with closed eyes, those judgments which God executed on all their neighbours, for all that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had predicted was fulfilled. Had they been silent respecting the ruin of Egypt, of the Philistines and the Moabites, the people, owing to their torpor, would not have considered God's judgments, but would have thought them to have all happened by chance. The Prophets then represented as in a mirror the power of God, that the Israelites might know that it extended to the whole world and to every nation.

This is the reason why Jeremiah now turns his discourse to the chosen people, and says, *Fear not, my servant Jacob.* He still speaks in God's name. Now God calls Jacob his servant, not on the ground of obedience, but because he had chosen him. Then by this word God sets forth the favour of adoption, and not the obedience of the people, for we know how refractory and disobedient they were; we know that they were continually shaking off the yoke, that they in-

sulted as it were God himself; very far were they from quietly submitting to his authority as it became servants. Here, then, the obedience of the Israelites is not commended, but that election is set forth by which God had set them apart from other nations. How then was Jacob God's servant? not because he deserved that honour by his own merits, but because God had been pleased gratuitously to choose him for himself. So also David says, "I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid," (Ps. cxvi. 16;) he means that he was as it were a hereditary servant, who had been already dedicated to God before he was conceived in his mother's womb. But as this mode of speaking often occurs, I pass it by with only a few words.

Fear not, O Jacob, he says, *and be not broken in mind, O Israel.* There are indeed two names used, but God thus addresses his people often; and why? *because I will save thee.* We now then see why God called Jacob his servant, even because the salvation of the elect people depended on this peculiar privilege, that God had chosen them for himself; *I will save thee,* he says, *from far.* The ten tribes, as it is well known, had already been driven far, and a part of Judah had been led into exile. Distance took away the hope of a return. Hence God here declares that a long distance would be no hinderance to him to restore his people when it seemed good to him; *Behold, I will save thee.* He then obviates this objection; "What! why then does God thus suffer us to be driven to foreign lands? why have we not staid in our own land?" God, he says, will not be less able to save thee in the remotest places, than if thou hadst remained in thy native country, and in thine own habitation. And he adds, *and thy seed, from the land of their captivity.*

We hence learn, that though the Prophet spoke of the temporal restoration of the people, he yet had a regard to higher and greater things, even that the captives should recumb on God's mercy, and believe that he would be propitious to them even when dead. This passage then shews that the hope of God's children is not confined to this life, but extends farther, in order that they may know that God will be propitious to them after death, and that they may

sustain themselves with the assurance of his favour, for otherwise this promise that God would restore their children after their death would have been absurd. "But why is he implacable to us? why does he not restore us sooner?" The Jews might have raised this objection; but the Prophet reminds them, that though they were not to be restored immediately to their country, yet the covenant of God would remain valid, and its stability would appear after seventy years.

We now perceive why the Prophet said, *Jacob shall return and rest, and shall be secure.* I wonder that some have rendered the last words, "and shall be happy," for שָׁאַן, *shanun*, means to be secure, or to rest; and then the Prophet explains himself, *nor will there be any to terrify.* We indeed know that it is the main part of happiness when no fear disturbs us, when our minds are in a composed and quiet state. Further, by these words he intimates the continuance of God's favour, as though he had said that his favour would not only be evident in restoring the people from exile, but in restoring the miserable in such a way as to grant them full and continued happiness. It follows,—

28. Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I *am* with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure: yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.

28. Tu ne timeas, serve mi Jacob, dicit Jehova, quia ego tecum, quia faciam consumptionem in cunctis gentibus ad quas te expulero illuc (*est supervacuum* שָׁמָּה;) et tecum non faciam consumptionem; et castigabo te in judicio, et excidendo non excidam te (*alii vertunt*, non faciam te innocentem, *sed male, ut postea dicemus.*)

He repeats the same thing, and no wonder, for under circumstances so hopeless it was not easy to raise up and sustain the minds of the people, so that they might patiently wait for the time of their redemption. He had to raise them to light as it were from the lowest depths, for captivity was little short of death, according to what Ezekiel says, (chap. xxxvii.) who shews that the common saying among them was, "Can God raise the dead from their graves?" Whenever the Prophets promised that God would become their Redeemer, they said, "Oh, will God raise us up again? It is

all a fable." For this reason God commanded dead and dry bones to rise and to assume their own skin and flesh, at least this was shewn to the Prophet in a vision.

We now then understand why the Prophet repeated twice what was in itself sufficiently clear, *Fear not, my servant Jacob*, even because they could not apprehend God's mercy, except they looked off from their great difficulties, and further, because it was not enough for them once to embrace this promise, without recumbing on it constantly. Hence the Prophet, in order to encourage them firmly to hope, and at the same time to render them persevering, and to confirm them, says twice, *Fear not, my servant Jacob.* He then adds, *I am with thee.* And this promise, as it has been said, depends on gratuitous adoption, because God had chosen that people for himself, that they might be a priestly kingdom.

He afterwards adds, *For I will make a consummation among all the nations*, &c. By this comparison he softens and alleviates all sorrow: for however bitter the condition of the people might be, yet when they considered that God would deal milder with them than with other mortals, it was a cause of ample consolation. The Prophet, then, seeing that the Jews, while their minds were embittered, could not accept God's favour, shews here, that however severely God might chastise them, he yet would be more merciful to them than to other nations: how so? *because*, he says, *I will make a consummation among other nations*, that is, they shall be destroyed without any remedy; as though he had said, that the wound he would inflict on other nations would be deadly, but that he would not make a consummation as to his chosen people.

This seems not to agree with what he had said before, that Egypt should be again inhabited as in days of old. How can the restoration of Egypt be consistent with the words of the Prophet here? To this I answer, that when God mitigates his rigour towards the unbelieving, he is not yet propitious to them, nor is the indulgence shewn to them a proof of his paternal favour, as I have before observed. Though then there were Egyptians who remained alive after

the ruin of their kingdom, yet God made a consummation in Egypt, for there his vengeance continued after that time. Now, when we come to the chosen people, God says in many places, *I will not make a consummation.* There seems to be here again some contrariety, when any one attends only to the words; for God is said to have made a consummation as to his elect people: but this was the case, when he destroyed the whole body of the people; and that consummation was external; there ever remained at the same time some hidden root.

In short, when God says, that he makes a consummation as to heathen nations, it ought to be understood, that God curses them from the root. As when a tree stands, when its root is dead; so also heathen nations, as it were, stand, but in the meantime they are consumed, for God has doomed them to eternal ruin. But consummation is said to be as to God's children, when nothing appears on the surface, but perhaps a dry trunk; yet a living root remains, which will again grow up, and from it branches will arise. We hence see how God makes a consummation as to all the unbelieving, and yet does not make a consummation as to his chosen people.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast testified that thou wilt be a Father to us, and hast given us a pledge of thy adoption, thine only-begotten Son,—O grant, that we, trusting in thy promise, may never doubt, even when thou severely chastisest us, but that thou wilt at length be merciful to us, and that we may thus never cease to flee to thy mercy, and thus submit to thee, and suffer ouselves to be corrected; and may, in the meantime, this hope sustain us, and alleviate all our sorrows, that in all our miseries we shall yet ever glorify thy name, through the same, thy Son our Lord.—Amen.

Lecture One Hundred and Sixty-Eighth.

We explained yesterday what is meant by not making a consummation. The meaning is, that sometimes God's vengeance is such towards his Church, that it seems to be

consumed, while yet some hidden hope remains, for God raises his own as it were from death. We said, that in this sense is to be understood what Jeremiah now promises to the chosen people: for God makes a distinction between the Israelites and strangers; for on account of the covenant he had made with them, he would spare them, so that some hope remained, though the Church itself seemed for a time to be lost.

And he explains himself in other words, *I will chastise thee*, he says, *in judgment;* for to chastise in judgment is to exercise moderation, so that rigour may not issue in destruction. In the tenth chapter, Jeremiah says the same, "Chastise me, O Jehovah, but in judgment, and not in thine anger." The Prophet, then, in the person of the faithful submitted himself to the scourges of God, because it was useful for them to be corrected, for had the Lord spared them, they would have abused his indulgence, and have become thus putrid in their vices. Hence the Prophet offered himself to be chastised by God, but deprecated his anger, which he set in opposition to judgment. The word judgment, in Hebrew, is taken in various senses; but in that passage, as I explained there, it means due measure, or moderation. When God punishes the unbelieving, he cannot be charged with extreme severity, for he is ever just and regards a due measure. But, as I have already said, judgment means not only rectitude, but also the paternal love of God, when he moderates punishment, so as to render it medicinal and salutary to his elect. Hence he promises to punish his Church moderately, not only because he is just, but also because he mercifully spares his own, and regards what they can bear, and what is useful for them.

Now this passage ought to be especially noticed, from which we may derive great consolation; for we are here taught that punishments inflicted on us are temporary, and that God prescribes limits to them, such as he knows to be best for us: for whence comes despair which overwhelms the unbelieving, except that being sunk in the deep, they know not that God will be merciful to them, but apprehend nothing but his wrath? Hence then it comes that they have no

comfort in their evils and sorrows. Whenever, then, excessive anxiety lays hold on us, or our evils drive us into despair, let us learn to flee to this consolation, even that the punishments by which we are chastised are only for a time.

He afterwards adds, *And cutting off I will not cut thee off.* There are some who give another rendering, "I will not make thee innocent:" and in this sense the verb נקה, *nuke*, is sometimes to be taken; but it is not suitable to the context here, unless the copulative be rendered as an adversative, "Though I shall not make thee innocent, I shall yet chastise thee with paternal moderation." As this, however, seems forced, I doubt not but that the Prophet means, that chastisement would be moderated, because God would not wholly cut off his chosen people, according to the exposition I gave on the thirtieth chapter of this book; and thus the Prophet confirms what I have already said, that God spares his children, because he purifies them by afflictions, as gold is melted and purified by fire, so that punishment does not issue in their destruction. Now follows the forty-seventh chapter:

CHAPTER XLVII.

1. The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza.

1. Qui fuit sermo Jehovæ ad Jeremiam Prophetam contra Philistim antequam percuteret Pharao Azah.

Jeremiah prophesies here against the Philistines, who were enemies to the Israelites, and had contrived against them many cruel and unjust things. There is then no doubt, but that God intended to testify, by this prophecy, his love towards the Israelites, for he undertook their cause, and avenged the wrongs done to them. We hence perceive why God had predicted the ruin of the Philistines, even that the Israelites might know his paternal love towards them, as he set himself against their enemies; and thus he gave them a reason for patience, because it behoved them to wait until God fulfilled this prophecy.

And he points out the time, *Before Pharaoh smote Aza*, or Gaza. The ancient Gaza, as far as we can find out, was

A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF JEREMIAH.

CHAPTERS XXX.—XLVIII.

CHAPTER XXX.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying,—Write thee
all the words which I have spoken to thee in a book;
3 For, behold, the days are coming, saith Jehovah, when I shall restore
the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah;
and I will restore them to the land which I gave to their
fathers, and they shall possess it.
4 Even these are the words which Jehovah hath spoken of
Israel and Judah,—
5 Surely thus saith Jehovah,—
A voice of trembling have we heard,
Of fear and not of peace.
6 Ask and see, can a male bring forth?
Why have I seen all men
With their hands on their loins as a woman in travail?
Turned also are all faces into paleness.
7 Alas! for great that day, none like it,
Even a time of distress to Jacob;
But from it shall he be saved:
8 And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts,
That I will break the yoke from thy neck,
And thy bands will I burst asunder,
And no more force thee to serve shall strangers;
9 But serve shall they Jehovah their God,
And David their king, whom I will raise up for them.
10 And thou Jacob my servant, fear not, saith Jehovah,
And be not thou, Israel, afraid;
For behold I will save thee from far,
And thy seed from the land of their captivity,
And dwell shall Jacob, and rest, and be secure,
And none shall terrify *him*:
11 For I *shall be* with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee;
For I will make an end of all the nations,

2. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.

2. Sic dicit Jehova, ecce aquæ ascendunt ab aquilone, et erunt in torrentem exundantem, et exundabunt terram et plenitudinem ejus, urbem et habitatores ejus, et clamabunt homo (*hoc est*, singuli homines clamabunt,) et ululabit omnis incola terræ.

The Prophet, no doubt, wished to remind the Jews that it would only be a prelude when Gaza was plundered, and that a far more grievous punishment was impending over that ungodly nation, which had done so many wrongs to God's people. For if Gaza had suffered only that loss, the Jews might have complained of their lot, as those ungodly men who had acted so wickedly and in so many ways provoked God's vengeance, had lightly suffered. They might then have objected and said, "What can this mean? God has indeed lightly smitten Gaza; but we would thus willingly redeem our lives: as those who wish to avoid shipwreck cast forth their goods into the sea, and whatever precious thing they may have; so we, if life only be given us, are prepared to part with all our property." The Jews then might have thus deplored their lot. Hence the Prophet says, that something more grievous awaited that city.

"When ye see Gaza plundered," he says, "think not that this is the last judgment of God; *for, behold, waters shall rise from the north*, that is, the Chaldeans shall complete the work of executing God's vengeance; the Egyptians shall only plunder the wealth of the city, which will be endurable; but at length the Chaldeans will come to exercise boundless cruelty, and they shall be like a flood, and shall overwhelm Gaza, so as utterly to destroy it." We now, then, see what the Prophet meant: there is implied a comparison between the plunder effected by the Egyptians and the final ruin brought on it by the Chaldeans.

The *rising* or ascending of *waters* is evidently a metaphorical expression. He adds that they would be an *overflowing torrent*, that is, the waters would be like an inundating river; *and they will inundate the land.* He speaks of the land of the Philistines, where this city was. *They*

will inundate, he says, *the land and its fulness*. Fulness taken in Hebrew for opulence or wealth; trees, corn, a animals are called the fulness of the land; for when t land brings forth no corn and no fruits, when it breeds animals, it is deemed naked and empty. As then G clothes the land with such ornaments, the land is said to full, when it abounds in those productions with which G enriches it. He afterwards speaks of men, *the city*, he say he speaks not now of the city Gaza, but of the wh country; then the singular number is to be taken here the plural. At length he says, *Cry shall men, and ho shall all the inhabitants of the land*. The number as to t verbs is here changed, but there is no ambiguity in t meaning. And by these words the Prophet intimates, th a most grievous punishment would be inflicted on t Philistines, so that they would not only cry for sorrow, b even howl. It follows,—

3. At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong *horses*, at the rushing of his chariots, *and at* the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to *their* children for feebleness of hands.

3. A voce strepitus ungular fortium ejus, a commotione cur ejus, a tumultu rotarum ejus, n respicient patres ad filios præ solutione manuum.

He continues the same subject; for he says, that grievous would be the calamity, that fathers would not ha a care for their children, which is a proof of extreme sorro for men even in adversity do not divest themselves of th natural feelings. When a father has children, he wou willingly undergo ten deaths, if necessary, in order to sa their life; but when men forget that they are parents, it a proof, as I have said, of the greatest grief, as though me having changed their nature, were become logs of woo But the Prophet expresses the cause, not only of sorro but also of anxiety; *From the voice*, he says, *of the noise the hoofs of his valiant* ones; he does not name the horse but פַּרְסוֹת, *peresut*, refer to horses; *hoofs*, he says, sha make a great noise by stamping. And then such would b the commotion by the driving of *chariots*, and such *tumult* would the revolving *wheels* create, that *fathers*, bein astonished, would not look on their *children*. At length, h

adds, *through dissolution of hands.* By dissolution of hands he means loss of courage or fainting. For as vigour spreads from the heart through every part of the body, so also the hands are the chief instruments of all actions. When therefore the hands are relaxed and become feeble, it follows that men become as it were inanimate. The Prophet now means that the Philistines would become like the dead, so as not to move, no, not even their fingers; and why? because they would be so terrified by the stamping of horses, by the commotion of chariots, and by the rumbling of wheels, that they would lose their senses. It follows,—

4. Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines, *and* to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth; for the Lord will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor.

4. Propter diem qui venit ad perdendum omnes Philistinos (*vel*, totam terram Philistinorum, *loquitur de terra et populo,*) ad excidendum Tyrum et Sidonem, totas reliquias fortitudinis; quia devastat Jehova Philistinos, reliquias insulæ Caphthor.

Jeremiah shews now more clearly, and without a figure, his meaning, even that destruction would come on the Philistines when their time was completed. And he mentions *Tyre* and *Sidon*, neighbouring cities, and formerly under their own jurisdiction. But Tyre in the time of Isaiah had its own king; yet afterwards in the time of Alexander the Great the city was free, as it is well known. These, however, were cities of Palestine, and the people called then Philistines were contiguous to these cities, so that the Prophet rightly includes them as it were in the same bundle. *Coming*, he says, *is the day to destroy all the Philistines*, and also *to cut off* the most opulent cities, even *Tyre* and *Sidon.*

Sidon was more ancient than Tyre; but the daughter devoured the mother, according to the common proverb. For Tyre in time flourished, and Sidon became almost forsaken. It, however, always retained a name and also some wealth on account of its commodious harbour. But Tyre was an island in the time of Alexander the Great; and was therefore more commodious for ships, as it had many harbours. But the Prophet connects them both together, because they formed then a part of the land of the Philistines. There is

no doubt but that the destruction was especially denounced on these cities, that the Jews might know that nothing would be safe throughout the whole land, inasmuch as these cities, the defences, as it were, of the whole country, were destined to perish.

He farther adds, on account of the day which is coming against all *the helping remnants, for Jehovah will destroy,* that is, he will destroy the Philistines, *who are the remnants* (it is indeed another word, but means the same) *of the island of Caphtor.* He confirms here the same thing in other words, even that God's hand would be on these cities and the whole land, though external aids might come; and these he calls *all the remnants of courage,* or auxiliaries. Though they might have many friends alive, ready to bring them help, yet the Lord would demolish them all, as it follows, *for Jehovah will destroy the Philistines, the remnants of the island of Caphtor.*

By the *island of Caphtor* he no doubt means Palestine; but it is doubtful for what reason the Hebrews called the Cappadocians Caphtorim. As it is hardly credible that they who inhabited this land had come from so far a country, interpreters have supposed that others, and not Cappadocians, are here called Caphtorim. Yet Moses intimates (Deut. ii. 23) that those who inhabited the land from Gaza to Jordan, were not natives, that is, were not born in those places, but that they were a wandering people; for he says, that "the Caphtorim went forth and dwelt there in the place of the natives." We may hence conclude that the Caphtorim were foreigners, who, wandering from their own country, sought an habitation elsewhere, and took possession of this land. Whether they were Cappadocians, I leave undecided; nor ought we to toil much on a subject of this kind. But as the Caphtorim had emigrated into Palestine, Jeremiah calls that region the *remnants of the island of Caphtor.* It follows,—

5. Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off *with* the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?	5. Venit calvitium super Gazam, destructa est Ascalon, reliquiæ vallis ipsorum (*vel*, profunditatis, *potius, ut mihi videtur,*) quousque laniabis te?

The Prophet returns again to what is figurative, that he

might more fully illustrate his prophecy, and more powerfully move the Jews. Now by *baldness* he points out a sign of mourning; for they were wont even to tear their faces with their nails, and to pluck off their hair. He then says that *baldness*, or the loss of hair, *had come upon Gaza;* because the inhabitants of the valley and of the whole land, according to what was usually done in despair, would pluck off their own hair. It is added, *Destroyed is Ashkelon.* This city, we know, had a great name in the land of the Philistines, and was nigh Gaza, as it appears from many parts of Scripture. He mentions *the remnants of their valley*, or depth, for the word is עמק, *omek:* and though it means a valley, yet the Prophet, no doubt, alludes to the situation of that part, because they were hid, as it were, in a safe place, and they thought themselves secure as those who are hid in caverns, to which an access is not easy; and then Tyre and Sidon, as well as Gaza, were cities on the sea side. As then they dwelt in these deep and hidden places, they thought themselves far away from every danger and trouble. The Prophet derides this confidence, and says that the *remnants of their valley* should perish; as though he had said, that there would be no place so deep and hidden where God's vengeance would not penetrate.

He at length addresses the whole country, *How long wilt thou tear thyself?* By tearing he means, no doubt, mourning or lamentation; for they would tear their faces, as it has been said, with their nails, as in the greatest grief. The meaning is, that there would be no end to their calamities, because the Palestines would mourn perpetually: for otherwise they who are even most grievously afflicted do not perpetually mourn, for time alleviates grief and sorrow. The Prophet then shews that so dreadful would be God's vengeance, that evils would be heaped on evils, and thus renewed daily to the Palestines would be the cause of mourning. He afterwards adds,—

6. O thou sword of the Lord, how long *will it be* ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still.

7. How can it be quiet, seeing

6. Heus gladie Jehovæ, quousque non quiesces? collige te (*vel*, reconde te) in vaginam tuam; quiesce et sile.

7. Quomodo quiesces, cum Je-

the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea-shore? there hath he appointed it.

hova præceperit ei (*vel*, de ipsa, *sed malo*, præceperit ei) super Ascalon, et super littus maris, illic contestatus sit ei?

Here Jeremiah turns to address the sword of God; and it is a happy apostrophe. It is very striking and forcible, when the Prophet at one time addresses the land of the Philistines, and at another, the sword of God; and he had no other object but to confirm his prophecy, of which otherwise, the Jews might have doubted.

He then says, *Ho! sword of Jehovah!* Though he puts here the preposition ל, *lamed*, which designates the dative case; yet it is often redundant. There is, in the meantime, no doubt but that he intimates that the slaughter of which he speaks would be, as it were, by God's sword, or by a sword hired by him. Thus he shews that the Chaldeans would do the work of God in destroying the land of the Philistines.

How long, he says, *ere thou restest! Hide thyself in thy sheath, rest and be still.* Here the Prophet assumes the character of another, as though he wished to soothe with blandishments the sword of God, and mitigate its fury. "O sword," he says, "spare them, leave off to rage against the Philistines." The Prophet, it is certain, had no such feeling; but, as we have said elsewhere, it was a common thing with the Prophets to assume different characters while endeavouring more fully to confirm their doctrine. It is the same, then, as though he represented here the Philistines; and the Prophets speak also often in the person of those on whom they denounce the vengeance of God. It is here as though he had said, "The Philistines will humbly ask pardon of God's sword, but it will be without advantage or profit; for when they seek to mitigate the wrath of God, the answer will be, *How can it rest?*" Here the Prophet, as it were, reproves himself, "I act foolishly in wishing to repress the sword of God; for how canst thou rest?" It could not be; and why? *because God hath commanded it against Ashkelon.* He now changes the person, but without any injury to the sense. *God*, then, *hath commanded it*, therefore the whole world would intercede in vain; in vain also will the Philis-

tines deprecate it; for it will not be in their power to mitigate God's wrath, when it shall burn against them and against Ashkelon.

Some take *it*, ה, *he*, as meaning the land itself; but as it immediately follows, *against Ashkelon* and *against the sea-shore*, it is better to explain it as above.

By the *sea-shore* some understand Joppa; but it is probable that the Prophet includes the whole coast, and that he thus still speaks of Tyre, and Sidon, and Gaza, though he names Ashkelon, which was a little distant from the sea. When, therefore, God commanded his sword against Ashkelon and all the cities which were by the sea-shore, the execution of his judgment could not be prevented in that region. He further adds, *he hath commanded it;* but it is in a solemn manner, and hence I have rendered the words, *he hath called it to witness*, or protested it. He then intimates that God had not simply given his sword a command to commit slaughters through the whole land, but bound his sword, as it were, by solemn protest; as though he had said, that this decree could not be revoked, because God will not only command his sword to execute his vengeance, but will also give it a solemn command, and bind it, as it were, by an oath, never to cease from its work until the whole people, and all the cities, and the whole land, should be destroyed together.

PRAYER.

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou wouldst have to exist a monument of thine invaluable mercy towards thy chosen people, when thou didst so grievously punish the unbelieving,—O grant, that we may at this day resort to thee whenever our enemies distress us, and never doubt but that thou wilt take care of our safety, and so recumb on thy mercy, that we may patiently wait for the time of our deliverance; and that, in the meantime, we may see from on high, as in a mirror, the punishment prepared for the unbelieving, so that we may not follow their example nor implicate ourselves in their vices, but separate ourselves from them, that, being devoted to thee, we may fight under the banner of thine only-begotten Son, until he shall gather us into his celestial kingdom.—Amen.

A TRANSLATION

OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF JEREMIAH.

CHAPTERS XXX.—XLVII.

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fathers, and they shall possess it.
4 Even these are the words which Jehovah hath spoken
Israel and Judah,—
5 Surely thus saith Jehovah,—
A voice of trembling have we heard,
Of fear and not of peace.
6 Ask and see, can a male bring forth?
Why have I seen all men
With their hands on their loins as a woman in travail?
Turned also are all faces into paleness.
7 Alas! for great that day, none like it,
Even a time of distress to Jacob;
Yet from it shall he be saved:
8 And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts,
That I will break the yoke from thy neck,
And thy bands will I burst asunder,
And no more force thee to serve shall strangers;
9 But serve shall they Jehovah their God,
And David their king, whom I will raise up for them.
10 And thou Jacob my servant, fear not, saith Jehovah,
And be not thou, Israel, afraid;
For behold I will save thee from far,
And thy seed from the land of their captivity,
And dwell shall Jacob, and rest, and be secure,
And none shall terrify *him:*
11 For I *shall be* with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee;
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And David their king, whom I will raise up for them.
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And be not thou, Israel, afraid;
For behold I will save thee from far,
And thy seed from the land of their captivity,
And dwell shall Jacob, and rest, and be secure,
And none shall terrify *him*:
11 For I *shall be* with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee;
For I will make an end of all the nations,

Among whom I shall scatter thee;
Yet of thee I will not make an end:
But I will chastise thee in moderation,
And I will not wholly cut thee off.

12 For thus saith Jehovah,
Grievous thy bruise, desperate thy wound!
13 No one undertakes thy cause;
For a cure, medicines and healing thou hast not.
14 All thy friends forget thee, they ask not for thee;
For with the stroke of an enemy have I struck thee,
With the chastisement of the cruel,
On account of the multitude of thine iniquity,
Because prevailed have thy sins.
15 Why criest thou because of thy bruise?
Heavy is thy sorrow:
For the multitude of thine iniquity
Because thy sins have prevailed,
Have I done these things to thee.
16 Therefore, all who devour thee shall be devoured,
And all thine enemies shall go into captivity,
And they who plunder thee shall become a plunder,
And all who spoil thee shall be a spoil:
17 For I will bring a healing to thee,
And from thy wounds will I heal thee, saith Jehovah;
Because an outcast have they called thee, Sion,
Whom no one careth for.

18 Thus saith Jehovah,—
Behold, I will restore the captivity of Jacob's tents,
And his dwellings will I pity;
And built shall be the city on its heaps,
And the palace in its own place shall stand:
19 And go forth from them shall praise and the voice of joy;
And I will increase them, and they shall not be lessened;
And I will honour them, and they shall not be degraded;
20 And his children shall be as at the beginning,
And his assembly before me shall be established,
And I will visit all his oppressors:
21 And his valiant *man* shall be from himself,
And his ruler from his midst shall come forth;
And I will bring him nigh, and he shall come to me;
For who is he who forms his heart,
That he may come to me, saith Jehovah!
22 And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

23 Behold *as* a tempest shall Jehovah's wrath go forth,
As an involving tempest;
On the head of the ungodly shall it settle:

24 Not return shall the fury of Jehovah's wrath,
Till he performs it, and till he effects the thoughts of his heart;
In the latter days ye shall understand this.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1 At that time, saith Jehovah,
Will I be a God to all the families of Israel;
And they shall be my people.

2 Thus saith Jehovah,—Found favour in the desert
Hath a people who had escaped the sword,
By advancing till he gave rest to Israel.
3 Of old Jehovah appeared to me:
Nay, with perpetual love have I loved thee;
Therefore have I prolonged to thee mercy.
4 I will yet build thee,
And built shalt thou be, virgin of Israel;
Thou shalt yet be adorned with thy tabrets,
And go forth with the choir of players;
5 Thou shalt yet plant vineyards
On the mountains of Samaria;
Plant shall planters and eat the fruit.
6 For the day shall be, when they shall cry,
The watchmen, on Mount Ephraim,—
"Arise, and let us ascend into Sion,
To Jehovah our God."

7 For thus saith Jehovah,—
Exult for Jacob with joy,
And shout at the head of the nations,
Publish, give thanks, and say,
"Save, Jehovah, thy people, the remnant of Israel."
8 Behold, I will bring them from the land of the north,
And gather them from the ends of the earth;
Among them shall be the blind and the lame,
The pregnant, and she that travaileth;
Together a great company shall they return thither.
9 With weeping shall they come,
And in mercies will I lead them;
I will lead them to streams of water,
In a straight way, where they shall not stumble:
For I will be to Israel a father,
And Ephraim, my first-born is he.

10 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye nations,
And tell *it* in islands afar off, and say,—
"He who scattered Israel will gather him,
And will watch him as a shepherd his flock:"

11 For redeem Jacob will Jehovah,
And free him from the hand of one stronger than himself;
12 And come shall they, and shout on the height of Sion;
And flow together shall they to the bounty of Jehovah,
For corn and wine and oil,
And for the young of the flock and the herd;
And their soul shall be as a watered garden,
And they shall mourn no more.
13 Then rejoice shall the virgin in the dance,
And the youth and the aged together;
And I will turn their mourning to joy,
And comfort them and cheer them after their sorrow;
14 And I will fill the soul of the priests with fatness,
And my people with my goodness shall be satiated, saith Jehovah.

15 Thus saith Jehovah,—
A voice on high is heard,
The lamentation of bitter weeping;
Rachel, weeping for her children,
Refused comfort for her children, because they are not.
16 Thus saith Jehovah,
Hold thy voice from weeping,
And thine eyes from tears;
For a reward shall be to thy work, saith Jehovah,
And return shall they from the land of the enemy:
17 Yea, there will be a hope in the latter end, saith Jehovah;
For return shall thy children to their own border.

18 Hearing I have heard Ephraim when exiled,—
"Thou hast chastised me, and I was instructed,
Like a bullock not trained;
Turn thou me, and I shall be turned,
For thou, Jehovah, art my God.
19 Verily, after thou hadst turned me, I repented;
And after I knew myself, I smote my thigh;
I was ashamed and even confounded,
Because I bore the reproach of my youth."

20 Is Ephraim a son dear to me—
Is he a son delighted in
Even from the time I spoke to him?
Remembering I will still remember him;
Therefore sounded for him have my bowels;
Pitying I pitied him, saith Jehovah.
21 Set up titles for thee, raise for thee heaps,
Fix thy heart on the pathway,
On the way thou hast walked;
Return, virgin of Israel, return to these thy cities.

22 How long wilt thou wander, rebellious daughter!
For create does Jehovah a new thing on the earth—
A woman shall surround a man.

23 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel,—
They shall again say this word in the land of Judah,
And in the cities, when I restore their captivity,—
"Bless thee let Jehovah,
The habitation of righteousness, the mount of holiness."
24 And dwell in it shall Judah and all his cities,
Also husbandmen, and they shall go with the flock:
25 For I will water the thirsty soul,
And every hungry soul will I fill.
26 I then awoke and saw,
And my sleep had been sweet to me.

27 Behold the days come, saith Jehovah,
That I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah,
With the seed of man and with the seed of beast:
28 And it shall be, that as I have watched over them,
To root up and to break down,
And to break in pieces and to destroy and to afflict;
So will I watch over them,
To build and to plant, saith Jehovah.
29 In those days they shall no more say,—
Our fathers have eaten a sour grape,
And the children's teeth are blunted;
30 But every man, in his iniquity shall he die;
Every man, eating a sour grape,
Blunted shall be his teeth.

31 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah,
That I will make with the house of Israel,
And with the house of Judah, a new covenant:
32 Not according to the covenant I made
With their fathers, in the day I took their hand,
To bring them out from the land of Egypt;
Because void have they made that covenant,
Though I ruled over them, saith Jehovah.
33 But this is the covenant which I will make
With the house of Israel, after those days, saith Jehovah,—
I will put my law in their inward parts,
And on their heart will I write it;
And I will be to them a God,
And they shall be to me a people:
34 And teach shall no one any more his neighbour,
And no one his brother, saying,—
"Know ye Jehovah;" for all shall know me,
From the least to the greatest of them, saith Jehovah;

For I will forgive their sins,
And their iniquities will I remember no more.

35 Thus saith Jehovah,—
He who hath set the sun for light by day,
And the courses of the moon and stars for light by night,
Who moves the sea and its waves roar,—
Jehovah of hosts is his name:
36 If removed shall be these ordinances
From my presence, saith Jehovah,
Then also the seed of Israel shall cease
To be a nation before me continually.
37 Thus saith Jehovah,—
If measured can be the heavens above,
Or searched the foundations of the earth below,
Then also will I reject the whole seed of Israel
For all that they have done, saith Jehovah.

38 Behold the days come, saith Jehovah,
That built shall be the city of Jehovah
From the tower of Hananeel to the corner gate;
39 And go forth shall the measuring line from before it,
Even to the hill Gareb, and surround Goatha,
40 And all the valley of carcasses and ashes,
And all the fields to the brook Kedron,
Even to the corner gate of the horses eastward:
Being holiness to Jehovah, it shall not be cut off,
Nor destroyed any more for ever.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah in the tenth
year of Zedekiah, king of Judah; this was the eighteenth
2 year of Nebuchadnezzar: and then the army of the king of
Babylon besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was
shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the palace of
3 the king of Judah; for Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him
up, saying, Why hast thou prophesied, saying,—
"Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I deliver this city into the
4 hand of the king of Babylon, and he wilt take it: and Zedekiah,
king of Judah, shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans;
for delivering I will deliver him into the hand of the king of
Babylon, and he shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his
5 eyes shall behold his eyes; and to Babylon will he bring Zede-
kiah, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith Jehovah:
when ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper."
6 And Jeremiah said, the word of Jehovah came to me,
saying,—
7 Behold, Hanameel, the son of Shallum thine uncle, will come

to thee and say, "Buy thee my field which is in Anathoth, for
8 thine is the right of affinity to buy." And Hanameel, my uncle's son, came to me, as Jehovah had spoken, into the court of the prison, and said, "Buy, I pray thee, my field which is in Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin, for thine is the right of inheritance, and thine the redemption; buy it for thyself."
9 Then I knew that it was the word of Jehovah; and I bought the field from Hanameel, my uncle's son, who was in Anathoth, and I weighed money to him, seven shekels and ten pieces of
10 silver: when I had written in a book and sealed it, and had
11 taken witnesses and weighed the money in a balance; then I took the book of the purchase, the sealed according to the law
12 and statute, and the open; and gave the book of the purchase to Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, before the eyes of Hanameel, my uncle's son, and before the eyes of the witnesses who were written in the book of the purchase, and before the eyes of all the Jews who sat in the court of the
13 prison; and I commanded Baruch in their presence, saying,—
14 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these books, the book of purchase, the sealed and the open book, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue for many
15 days; for thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, They shall again buy houses and fields and vineyards in this land.

16 And I prayed to Jehovah, after I gave the book of the purchase to Baruch, the son of Neriah, saying,—
17 "Ah! Lord Jehovah! behold thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and by thine extended arm;
18 there is nothing difficult for thee: thou shewest mercy to thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them: God, strong, mighty! Jehovah of
19 hosts is his name; great in counsel, mighty in work, whose eyes are open on all the ways of the children of men, to render to every one according to his ways and according to the fruit
20 of his doings; who hast wrought signs and wonders in the land of Egypt even to this day, and in Israel and among men; and
21 hast made thyself a name as at this day; and hast brought forth thy people Israel from the land of Egypt by signs and wonders, and with a strong hand and an extended arm, and
22 with great terror; and hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with
23 milk and honey; and they entered in and possessed it, but they have not hearkened to thy voice nor walked in thy law; all that thou hast commanded them to do they have not done; therefore hast thou made all this evil to befall them.
24 "Behold, the mounts have come to the city to take it, and the city is given to the hand of the Chaldeans, who war against it by means of the sword, the famine, and the pestilence; and what thou hast spoken has happened; and behold thou seest it.

25 Yet thou, Lord Jehovah, hast said to me, Buy thee the field for
money, and make witnesses to attest, when yet the city is given
into the hand of the Chaldeans."

26 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying,—
27 Behold, I Jehovah, am the God of all flesh,
28 Will anything be hard for me? Therefore thus saith Jehovah,
Behold I give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans and into
the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall
29 take it; and enter in shall the Chaldeans who war against the
city, and shall set this city on fire and burn it, and the houses
on the roofs of which they have burned incense to Baal, and
30 poured out libations to alien gods, in order to provoke me. For
the children of Israel and the children of Judah have been
only doing evil before me from their childhood; for the children
of Israel have been only provoking me by the work of their
31 hands, saith Jehovah. For to *provoke* my wrath and my in-
dignation has this city been to me from the day they built it
32 to this day, to cause me to remove it from my presence, for all
the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah,
which they have done to provoke me to wrath,—they, their
kings, their princes, their priests and prophets, and the men of
33 Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. For they turned to
me the back and not the face; and when I taught them, rising
up early and teaching them, they hearkened not so as to receive
34 correction: and they have set their abominations in the house
35 on which my name is called, to pollute it; and have built high
places to Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom,
to cause their sons and their daughters to pass to Molech, which
I commanded them not, nor did it come to my mind, to do
this abomination so as to make Judah to sin.
36 And now, therefore, thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,
concerning this city of which ye say, "Given it is into the
hand of the king of Babylon, by the sword, and famine, and
37 pestilence;" behold I will gather them from all the lands to
which I shall have driven them in my wrath, and fury, and
great indignation, and will restore them to this land, and make
38 them dwell in safety; and they shall be to me a people, and I
39 will be to them a God. And I will give them one heart and
one way that they may fear me continually, that it may be well
40 with them and with their children after them; and I will make
with them a perpetual covenant, so as not to depart from them
to do them good; and my fear will I put in their hearts, that
41 they may not depart from me; and I will rejoice over them in
doing them good, and will plant them in this land in truth,
42 with all my heart, and with all my soul. For thus saith Je-
hovah, As I have brought on this people all this great evil, so
will I bring on them all the good which I have declared con-
43 cerning them: and bought shall be fields in this land of which

With David my servant,
That he should have no son to reign on his throne,
And with the Levites, the priests, my ministers.
22 As the hosts of the heavens cannot be numbered,
Nor the sand of the sea be measured;
So will I multiply the seed of David my servant,
And of the Levites my ministers.

23 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying,—
Hast thou not seen how this people speak, saying,—
"There are two families whom Jehovah has chosen,
But he has rejected them;"
24 And my people have they despised,
So as no more to regard them as a nation.
25 Thus saith Jehovah, If I have not settled
My covenant with the day and the night,
And the laws of the heavens and the earth,
26 Then I will reject the seed of Jacob
And of David my servant,
So as not to take of his seed to be rulers
Over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:
For I will restore their captivity
And will shew mercy to them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, when Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and his whole army, and all the kingdoms of the earth, which were under his dominion, and all the nations, made war against Jerusalem and all the cities, saying,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Go and say to Zedekiah, the king of Judah, yea, say to him, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold I deliver this city into the hand of the king of Babylon,
3 and he shall burn it with fire; and thou shalt not be saved from his hand, for thou shalt surely be taken, and into his hands shalt thou be delivered, and thine eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon, and his mouth shall speak to thy mouth, and
4 to Babylon shalt thou go. Yet hear the word of Jehovah, thou Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith Jehovah of thee,
5 Thou shalt not die by the sword; in peace shalt thou die, and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings, who were before thee, so shall they burn thee, and, "Ah! Lord!" shall they lament for thee: for the word have I spoken, saith Je-
6 hovah. And Jeremiah the prophet spake to Zedekiah king of
7 Judah all these words in Jerusalem, when the armies of the king of Babylon were fighting against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah, which remained, even Lachish and Azekah; for these remained of the cities of Judah, being fortified cities.

"Desolate it is, without man and without beast
Even in the cities of Judah
And in the streets of Jerusalem,
Which are reduced to solitude, without man,
And without an inhabitant, and without a beast,"—
11 Shall be the voice of joy and the voice of gladness,
The bridegroom's voice and the voice of the bride,
The voice of them who say, "Praise Jehovah of hosts,
For good is Jehovah, for his mercy is for ever,"—
Of them who shall bring the sacrifice of praise
Into the house of Jehovah;
For I will restore the captivity of the land
As at the first, saith Jehovah.

12 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,—
There shall yet be in this place,
Desolate, without man and beast,
And in all its cities, the habitation
Of shepherds making their flock to lie down:
13 In the cities of the mountain and the cities of the plain,
And in the cities of the south and in the land of Benjamin,
And around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah,
Shall sheep yet pass under the hands
Of a numberer, saith Jehovah.

14 Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah,
That I will confirm my good word,
Which I have spoken to the house of Israel,
And to the house of Judah:
15 In those days and at that time
I will make to grow to David a branch of righteousness,
And he will do judgment and righteousness in the land.
16 In those days saved shall be Judah,
And Jerusalem shall dwell in safety;
And this is the name by which she shall be called,
JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.
17 For thus saith Jehovah,—
Not fail to David shall a man
To sit on the throne of the house of Israel;
18 And to the priests, the Levites, not fail shall a man,
To offer before me burnt-offerings,
To burn an oblation and to sacrifice continually.

19 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying,—
20 Thus saith Jehovah, If void ye can make
My covenant as to the day,
And my covenant as to the night,
That the day and night should not be in their seasons;
21 Then void shall be made my covenant

CHAPTER XXXV.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, in the days
of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, saying,—
2 Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak to them, and
bring them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers,
3 and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jaazaniah, the son
of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all
4 his sons, even the whole house of the Rechabites; and brought
them into the house of Jehovah, into the chamber of the sons
of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was nigh
the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of
5 Maaseiah, the son of Shallum, the keeper of the treasury; and
I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of
6 wine and cups; and I said to them, Drink wine. But they
said, We will not drink wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab,
our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall not drink wine,
7 neither ye, nor your sons for ever; and houses ye shall not
build, nor sow seed, nor plant a vineyard, nor have any such
thing; but ye shall dwell in tents all your days; that ye may
8 live many days in the land where ye are strangers. And we
have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father,
9 as to all the things which he commanded us, that we should
not drink wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our
daughters; nor build houses to dwell in, nor have a vineyard,
10 or a field, or seed; but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed,
and done according to all things which Jonadab our father hath
11 commanded us. But it was that, when Nebuchadnezzar, the
king of Babylon, came up into the land, we then said, Come,
let us enter into Jerusalem from the face of the army of the
Chaldeans, and from the face of the army of the Syrians; and
we have dwelt in Jerusalem.

12 Then came the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah, saying,—
13 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell
the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye
not receive instruction, so as to obey my words? saith Jehovah:
14 confirmed are the words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which
he commanded his sons, that they should not drink wine, for they
have drunk none to this day, but they have obeyed the com-
mandment of their father: but I have spoken to you, rising up
15 early and speaking, yet ye have not obeyed me; and I have
sent to you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and
sending, saying, Return, I pray you, every one from his evil
way, and make right your doings, and walk not after foreign
gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have
given to you and to your fathers: but ye inclined not your ear
16 nor obeyed me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab
have performed the command of their father, which he had

8 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, after King
Zedekiah made a covenant with all the people, who were in
9 Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them,—that every one should
let his servant and every one his maid, a Hebrew and a
Hebrewess, go free, so that no one among the Jews might make
10 his brother to serve. And hear did all the princes and all the
people, who had come to the covenant to let each his servant
and each his maid go free, so as not to make them any more to
11 serve, and they obeyed and dismissed them. But they changed
afterwards, and remanded their servants and maids whom they
12 had set free, and forced them to be servants and maids. Then
came the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying,—
13 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,—I made a covenant
with your fathers in the day when I brought them from the
14 land of Egypt, from the house of servants, saying,—At the end
of seven years ye shall let free every one his brother, an
Hebrew, who had been sold to thee and served thee six years,
yea, thou shalt let him depart free from thee; but your fathers
15 hearkened not to me nor inclined their ear. But ye have
turned this day and have done what is right in mine eyes, by
proclaiming liberty, every one to his neighbour, and ye have
made a covenant before me in the house on which my name is
16 called. But ye have gone back and have profaned my name,
and ye have remanded every one his servant and every one his
maid, whom ye had set free to follow their own will, and forced
them to be servants and maids. Therefore, thus saith Jehovah,
17 Ye have not hearkened to me in proclaiming liberty, every one
to his brother and every one to his neighbour; behold, I pro-
claim as to you, saith Jehovah, liberty to the sword, to the pesti-
lence, and to the famine; and I will give you for a commotion to
18 all the kingdoms of the earth; yea, I will give the men who have
transgressed my covenant, who have not confirmed the words of
the covenant which they had made before me by the calf which
19 they cut into two parts, and passed between its parts, *even* the
princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem, the chiefs and
the priests and all the people, who passed between the parts of
20 the calf; yea, I will give them into the hand of their enemies
and into the hand of those who seek their life; and their car-
cases shall be food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of
21 the earth; and Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I
give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those
who seek their life, even into the hand of the king of Babylon's
22 army, which have gone up from you. Behold, I will command,
saith Jehovah, and will make them to return to this city; and
they shall take it and burn it with fire, and make the cities of
Judah a waste without an inhabitant.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, in the days
of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, saying,—
2 Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak to them, and
bring them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers,
3 and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jaazaniah, the son
of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all
4 his sons, even the whole house of the Rechabites; and brought
them into the house of Jehovah, into the chamber of the sons
of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was nigh
the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of
5 Maaseiah, the son of Shallum, the keeper of the treasury; and
I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of
6 wine and cups; and I said to them, Drink wine. But they
said, We will not drink wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab,
our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall not drink wine,
7 neither ye, nor your sons for ever; and houses ye shall not
build, nor sow seed, nor plant a vineyard, nor have any such
thing; but ye shall dwell in tents all your days; that ye may
8 live many days in the land where ye are strangers. And we
have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father,
9 as to all the things which he commanded us, that we should
not drink wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our
daughters; nor build houses to dwell in, nor have a vineyard,
10 or a field, or seed; but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed,
and done according to all things which Jonadab our father hath
11 commanded us. But it was that, when Nebuchadnezzar, the
king of Babylon, came up into the land, we then said, Come,
let us enter into Jerusalem from the face of the army of the
Chaldeans, and from the face of the army of the Syrians; and
we have dwelt in Jerusalem.

12 Then came the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah, saying,—
13 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell
the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye
not receive instruction, so as to obey my words? saith Jehovah:
14 confirmed are the words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which
he commanded his sons, that they should not drink wine, for they
have drunk none to this day, but they have obeyed the com-
mandment of their father: but I have spoken to you, rising up
15 early and speaking, yet ye have not obeyed me; and I have
sent to you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and
sending, saying, Return, I pray you, every one from his evil
way, and make right your doings, and walk not after foreign
gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have
given to you and to your fathers: but ye inclined not your ear
16 nor obeyed me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab
have performed the command of their father, which he had

8 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, after King
Zedekiah made a covenant with all the people, who were in
9 Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them,—that every one should
let his servant and every one his maid, a Hebrew and a
Hebrewess, go free, so that no one among the Jews might make
10 his brother to serve. And hear did all the princes and all the
people, who had come to the covenant to let each his servant
and each his maid go free, so as not to make them any more to
11 serve, and they obeyed and dismissed them. But they changed
afterwards, and remanded their servants and maids whom they
12 had set free, and forced them to be servants and maids. Then
came the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying,—
13 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,—I made a covenant
with your fathers in the day when I brought them from the
14 land of Egypt, from the house of servants, saying,—At the end
of seven years ye shall let free every one his brother, an
Hebrew, who had been sold to thee and served thee six years,
yea, thou shalt let him depart free from thee; but your fathers
15 hearkened not to me nor inclined their ear. But ye have
turned this day and have done what is right in mine eyes, by
proclaiming liberty, every one to his neighbour, and ye have
made a covenant before me in the house on which my name is
16 called. But ye have gone back and have profaned my name,
and ye have remanded every one his servant and every one his
maid, whom ye had set free to follow their own will, and forced
them to be servants and maids. Therefore, thus saith Jehovah,
17 Ye have not hearkened to me in proclaiming liberty, every one
to his brother and every one to his neighbour; behold, I pro-
claim as to you, saith Jehovah, liberty to the sword, to the pesti-
lence, and to the famine; and I will give you for a commotion to
18 all the kingdoms of the earth; yea, I will give the men who have
transgressed my covenant, who have not confirmed the words of
the covenant which they had made before me by the calf which
19 they cut into two parts, and passed between its parts, *even* the
princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem, the chiefs and
the priests and all the people, who passed between the parts of
20 the calf; yea, I will give them into the hand of their enemies
and into the hand of those who seek their life; and their car-
cases shall be food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of
21 the earth; and Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I
give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those
who seek their life, even into the hand of the king of Babylon's
22 army, which have gone up from you. Behold, I will command,
saith Jehovah, and will make them to return to this city; and
they shall take it and burn it with fire, and make the cities of
Judah a waste without an inhabitant.

14 away to the Chaldeans: and Jeremiah said, It is false, I am
not falling away to the Chaldeans; but he did not hearken to
him. And Irijah laid hold on Jeremiah and brought him to
15 the princes. And the princes were incensed against Jeremiah,
and smote him, and put him in the house of prison, in the house
of Jonathan the scribe, for they made that the house of prison.
16 When Jeremiah came into the dungeon and into the cells,
17 and had been there many days, then Zedekiah the king sent
and took him out; and the king asked him privately and said,
Is there a word from Jehovah? and Jeremiah said, There is:
and he hath said, Into the hand of the king of Babylon shalt
18 thou be delivered. And Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah,
What sin have I done against thee and thy servants and this
people, that ye have delivered me into the house of prison?
19 And where are your prophets who have prophesied to you,
saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you nor
20 against this land? And now hear, I pray thee, O lord my
king; let my humble prayer be acceptable to thee, cause me
not to return into the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I should
21 die there. And King Zedekiah commanded, and they put
Jeremiah in the court of the prison, and gave him a crust of
bread daily, from the street of the bakers, until all the bread of
the city was consumed: and Jeremiah remained in the court of
the prison.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1 And Shephatiah; the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah, the son of
Pashur, and Jucal, the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur, the son
Malchiah, heard the words which Jeremiah had spoken to all
the people, saying,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah, He who remains in this city shall die
by the sword, famine, or pestilence; but he who goeth forth to
the Chaldeans shall live; and his life shall be to him a prey,
3 and he shall live. Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, this city shall
surely be delivered into the hand of the army of the king of
Babylon, and they shall take it.
4 And the princes said to the king, Let this man, we pray thee,
die; for he thus weakens the hands of the men of war who
remain in this city, and the hands of the people, by speaking
to them according to these words: for this man seeketh not the
5 peace of this people but their ruin. And King Zedekiah said to
them, Behold, he is in your hands, for the king can do nothing
6 against you. And they took Jeremiah and cast him into the
dungeon of Malchiah, the son of Hammelech, which was in the
court of the prison; and they let Jeremiah down with cords;
and there was no water in the dungeon, but mire, and Jeremiah
sunk in the mire.
7 Now Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, an eunuch, heard that they

commanded them, while this people have not obeyed me,—
17 therefore thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will bring on Judah, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil which I have pronounced against them; for I have spoken to them, and they have not hearkened; and I have called them, but they have not answered.
18 And to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the command of Jonadab your father, and have kept all his commandments, and have done according to all the things which he had commanded you; therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, There shall not fail a man from Jonadab the son of Rechab to stand before me continually.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1 And it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, that this word came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying,—
2 Take thee a roll of a book and write in it all the words which I have spoken to thee concerning Israel and concerning Judah, and concerning all the nations, from the day in which I have
3 spoken to thee, from the days of Josiah, even to this day. It may be that the house of Judah will attend to all the evil which I purpose to do to them, so that they may return, every one from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.
4 And Jeremiah called Baruch, the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah,
5 which he had spoken to him, in a roll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up, I cannot go to
6 the house of Jehovah; but go thou and read in the roll what thou hast written from my mouth, the words of Jehovah, in the ears of the people, in the house of Jehovah, on a fast day; and also in the ears of all Judah, who come from their cities shalt
7 thou read them. It may be that they will prostrate themselves before Jehovah, and return every one from his evil way; for great is the indignation, and great is the wrath which Jehovah
8 has spoken against this people. And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all the things which Jeremiah the prophet had commanded him, reading in the book the words of Jehovah in the house of Jehovah.
9 And it was that in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, in the ninth month, they proclaimed a fast before Jehovah to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem.
10 And Baruch read in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah, in the chamber of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entrance of the new gate of the house of Jehovah, in the ears of all the people.

24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, Let no man know of these
25 words, and thou shalt not die: but if the princes hear that I have spoken with thee, and come to thee and say to thee, Tell us now what thou hast spoken to the king, hide nothing from us, and we will not kill thee, and what the king hath said to
26 thee; then shalt thou say to them, I humbly prayed the king that he would not make me to return to the house of Jonathan
27 to die there. And all the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him; and he told them according to those words which the king had commanded; and they said no more, for the conver-
28 sation had not been heard. And Jeremiah dwelt in the court of the prison to the day when Jerusalem was taken: and it happened according *to what he had said* that Jerusalem was taken.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1 In the ninth year of Zedekiah, the king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and
2 all his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it; in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth of the
3 month, the city was broken into; and all the chiefs of the king of Babylon entered and sat in the middle gate, even Nergal-sharezar, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, and the rest of the chiefs of the king of Babylon.
4 And it was that when Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and all the men of war, saw them, they fled and went forth from the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and went forth by the way of the desert.
5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them, and took Zedekiah in the desert of Jericho; and they took him and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to Riblah, in the
6 land of Hamath, and he dealt judicially with him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah before his eyes; and all the nobles of Judah did the king of Babylon slay:
7 and he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with chains, to bring him to Babylon.
8 And the house of the king, and the houses of the people, the Chaldeans burned with fire, and the walls of Jerusalem they
9 pulled down: but the residue of the people who had remained in the city, and the deserters who had gone over to him, even the residue of the people who had been left, Nebuzar-adan, the
10 prince of the executioners, removed to Babylon. But the poor of the people, who had nothing, Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the executioners, left in the land of Judah, and gave them in that day vineyards and fields.
11 Now Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had given a charge respecting Jeremiah by Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the
12 executioners, saying, Take him, and set thine eyes on him, and

had cast Jeremiah into the dungeon; and the king was sitting
8 in the gate of Benjamin; and Ebedmelech went forth from the
9 king's house and spake to the king, saying, O lord my king, these men have acted wickedly, in all that they have done to Jeremiah the Prophet, in throwing him into the dungeon, where if left alone he must die with hunger; for there is no
10 more bread in the city. Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take with thee hence thirty men, and bring up Jeremiah the Prophet from the dungeon before he die.
11 And Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the king's house, even to a place under the store-room, and took from thence rags torn and worn out, and let them down by
12 cords to Jeremiah in the dungeon. And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, said to Jeremiah, Put now these torn and worn-out rags under thine arm-holes under the cords. And Jeremiah
13 did so. Then they drew up Jeremiah by the cords, and raised him up from the dungeon; and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.
14 And King Zedekiah sent and took Jeremiah the Prophet with him to the third entrance, which is in the house of Jehovah; and the king said to Jeremiah, "I ask thee a word; hide not a
15 word from me." And Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, If I tell thee, slaying, wilt thou not slay me? and if I give thee counsel thou
16 wilt not hearken to me. And Zedekiah the king sware to Jeremiah in secret, saying, Live doth Jehovah, who made us this soul, I will not slay thee, and I will not deliver thee unto
17 the hand of those who seek thy life. Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, If going thou wilt go forth unto the chiefs of the king of Babylon, live shall thy life, and this city shall not be burned
18 with fire, but live shalt thou and thy house: but if thou wilt not go forth to the chiefs of the king of Babylon, delivered shall be this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and burn it shall
19 they with fire, and thou shalt not escape from their hand. And King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, I fear the Jews who have gone over to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hands
20 and reproach me. Then Jeremiah said, They will not deliver thee: hearken, I pray thee, to the voice of Jehovah which I announce to thee, and it shall be well with thee, and live shall
21 thy soul: but if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word which
22 Jehovah has shewn to me,—Behold, even all the women who remain in the house of the king of Judah, shall go forth to the chiefs of the king of Babylon; and behold, they shall say, "Persuaded thee and prevailed over thee have thy familiar friends; fixed are thy feet in the mire, turned backward."
23 And all thy wives and thy children shall they bring out to the Chaldeans, and thou shalt not escape from their hand, for by the hand of the king of Babylon shalt thou be taken, and this city wilt thou burn with fire.

ye say, "Forsaken it is by man and beast, *and* given into the
44 hand of the Chaldeans." Fields with money shall they buy,
writing in a book and sealing, and attesting by witnesses, in the
land of Benjamin, and through the circuits of Jerusalem, and in
the cities of Judah, and in cities on the mountains, and in
cities on the plains, and in the cities of the south; for I will
restore their captivity, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah a second time,
when he was as yet a captive in the court of the prison,
saying,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah that made it,
Jehovah who formed it to establish it,
Jehovah is his name,—
3 Call to me and I will answer thee,
And declare to thee great things
And hidden things which thou knowest not.

4 For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,—
As to the houses of this city,
And as to the houses of the kings of Judah,
Which have been thrown down
By the warlike engines and by the sword;
5 They come to fight with the Chaldeans,
Even to fill them (houses) with the carcases of men,
Whom I have smitten in my wrath and indignation,
And because I hid my face from this city
On account of all its wickedness,—
6 Behold I will bring to it restoration and healing,
And I will heal them and open for them
An abundance of peace and truth;
7 And I will restore the captivity of Judah
And the captivity of Israel,
And build them as at the beginning;
8 And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity,
By which they have sinned against me,
And will forgive all their iniquities,
By which they have sinned against me,
And by which they have acted wickedly towards me:
9 And it shall be for me a name of joy,
A praise and glory, among all nations of the earth,
Who shall hear of all the good which I shall do to them
And fear shall they and tremble for all the good
And all the peace which I shall give them.

10 Thus saith Jehovah,—
Yet heard in this place, of which ye say—

do him no harm; but as he shall say to thee do thou to him.
13 And Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the executioners, sent, and
Nebushasban, Rab-saris and Nergal-sharezar, Rab-mag, and all
14 the chiefs of the king of Babylon, yea, they sent and took Jere-
miah from the court of the prison, and delivered him to Geda-
liah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to lead him home;
and so he dwelt among the people.
15 But the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah when he was yet
16 shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Go and speak to
Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of
hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I bring my words on this city
for evil and not for good; and they shall be before thy face that
17 day: but I will deliver thee in that day, saith Jehovah, and
thou shalt not be delivered into the hand of the men, the face
18 of whom thou fearest; for I will surely rescue thee, by the
sword thou shalt not fall, and thy life shall be for a prey to thee,
because thou hast trusted in me, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER XL.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, after Nebu-
zar-adan, the prince of the executioners, had let him go from
Ramah, when he had taken him; for he had been bound with
chains among all the captivity of Jerusalem and Judah, who
2 were carried away to Babylon. But the prince of the execu-
tioners took Jeremiah, and said to him,—
3 Jehovah thy God hath spoken this evil as to this place: and
Jehovah hath brought it and done as he had spoken, because
ye have sinned against Jehovah and hearkened not to his voice;
4 therefore hath this evil come upon you. Now, as to thee, be-
hold, I have loosed thee this day from the chains which were
on thine hands; if it be good in thine eyes to come to Babylon,
come, and I will set mine eyes on thee; but if it be evil in thine
eyes to come to Babylon, forbear: behold, the whole land is
before thee; according to what is good and right in thine eyes
5 to go, thither go. (And he had not yet returned,) return then
to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the
king of Babylon hath set over the cities of Judah, and dwell
with him among the people, or go to whatever place it seemeth
good in thine eyes to go. And the prince of the executioners
6 gave him meat and a reward, and dismissed him: and Jere-
miah went to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and
dwelt with him among the people who had been left in the land.
7 When all the princes of the forces who were in the field, they
and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had set Gedaliah,
the son of Ahikam, over the land, and that he had committed
to him men, and women, and children, and the poor of the land,
8 who had not been removed to Babylon; then came to Gedaliah
to Mizpah, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and

With David my servant,
That he should have no son to reign on his throne,
And with the Levites, the priests, my ministers.
22 As the hosts of the heavens cannot be numbered,
Nor the sand of the sea be measured;
So will I multiply the seed of David my servant,
And of the Levites my ministers.

23 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah, saying,—
Hast thou not seen how this people speak, saying,—
"There are two families whom Jehovah has chosen,
But he has rejected them;"
24 And my people have they despised,
So as no more to regard them as a nation.
25 Thus saith Jehovah, If I have not settled
My covenant with the day and the night,
And the laws of the heavens and the earth,
26 Then I will reject the seed of Jacob
And of David my servant,
So as not to take of his seed to be rulers
Over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:
For I will restore their captivity
And will shew mercy to them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, when Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and his whole army, and all the kingdoms of the earth, which were under his dominion, and all the nations, made war against Jerusalem and all the cities, saying,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Go and say to Zedekiah, the king of Judah, yea, say to him, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold I deliver this city into the hand of the king of Babylon,
3 and he shall burn it with fire; and thou shalt not be saved from his hand, for thou shalt surely be taken, and into his hands shalt thou be delivered, and thine eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon, and his mouth shall speak to thy mouth, and
4 to Babylon shalt thou go. Yet hear the word of Jehovah, thou Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith Jehovah of thee,
5 Thou shalt not die by the sword; in peace shalt thou die, and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings, who were before thee, so shall they burn thee, and, "Ah! Lord!" shall they lament for thee: for the word have I spoken, saith Je-
6 hovah. And Jeremiah the prophet spake to Zedekiah king of
7 Judah all these words in Jerusalem, when the armies of the king of Babylon were fighting against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah, which remained, even Lachish and Azekah; for these remained of the cities of Judah, being fortified cities.

that when he met them, he said to them, Come to Gedaliah, the
7 son of Ahikam. And it was that when they had come to the
midst of the city, Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, slew them, nigh
the middle of the trench, he and the men who were with him.
8 But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, Slay
us not; for we have hidden stores in the field, wheat, and barley,
and oil, and honey; and he forbare, and slew them not among
their brethren.
9 Now the trench into which Ishmael cast all the carcàses of
the men whom he had smitten along with Gedaliah, was that
which King Asa had made on account of Baasha, the king of
Israel; this did Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, fill with the slain.
10 Then Ishmael took captive all the remnant of the people who
were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people
who had been left in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan, the prince
of the executioners, had committed to the care of Gedaliah, the
son of Ahikam; yea, Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, took them
and went, that he might pass over to the children of Ammon.
11 But Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the
forces who were with him, heard of all the evil which Ishmael,
12 the son of Nethaniah, had done; and they took all the men,
and went forth to fight with Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah,
13 and found him at the great waters which are in Gibeon. And
it was that when all the people who were with Ishmael saw
Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the forces
14 who were with him, they rejoiced: and all the people whom
Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah, turned, and returned,
15 and went with Johanan, the son of Kareah; but Ishmael, the
son of Nethaniah, escaped with eight men from Johanan, and
went to the children of Ammon.
16 And Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the
forces who were with him, took all the remnant of the people,
whom he had recovered from Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah,
from Mizpah, after he had smitten Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam,
strong men, men of war, and women, and children, and eunuchs,
17 whom he had recovered from Gibeon; and they went and dwelt
in Geruth-Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, that they might
18 proceed to enter into Egypt, on account of the Chaldeans, for they
feared them, because Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, had smitten
Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had set over the land.

CHAPTER XLII.

1 Then came near all the leaders of the forces and Johanan,
the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah, the son of Hoshaiah, and all
the people, from the least to the greatest, and said to Jeremiah
2 the prophet,—Let our petition, we pray thee, be acceptable to
thee; pray now for us to Jehovah thy God in behalf of this
remnant, for we are left a few out of many, as thine eyes see

CHAPTER XXXV.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, in the days
of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, saying,—
2 Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak to them, and
bring them into the house of Jehovah, into one of the chambers,
3 and give them wine to drink. Then I took Jaazaniah, the son
of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all
4 his sons, even the whole house of the Rechabites; and brought
them into the house of Jehovah, into the chamber of the sons
of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was nigh
the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of
5 Maaseiah, the son of Shallum, the keeper of the treasury; and
I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of
6 wine and cups; and I said to them, Drink wine. But they
said, We will not drink wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab,
our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall not drink wine,
7 neither ye, nor your sons for ever; and houses ye shall not
build, nor sow seed, nor plant a vineyard, nor have any such
thing; but ye shall dwell in tents all your days; that ye may
8 live many days in the land where ye are strangers. And we
have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father,
9 as to all the things which he commanded us, that we should
not drink wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our
daughters; nor build houses to dwell in, nor have a vineyard,
10 or a field, or seed; but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed,
and done according to all things which Jonadab our father hath
11 commanded us. But it was that, when Nebuchadnezzar, the
king of Babylon, came up into the land, we then said, Come,
let us enter into Jerusalem from the face of the army of the
Chaldeans, and from the face of the army of the Syrians; and
we have dwelt in Jerusalem.

12 Then came the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah, saying,—
13 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell
the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye
not receive instruction, so as to obey my words? saith Jehovah:
14 confirmed are the words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which
he commanded his sons, that they should not drink wine, for they
have drunk none to this day, but they have obeyed the com-
mandment of their father: but I have spoken to you, rising up
15 early and speaking, yet ye have not obeyed me; and I have
sent to you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and
sending, saying, Return, I pray you, every one from his evil
way, and make right your doings, and walk not after foreign
gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have
given to you and to your fathers: but ye inclined not your ear
16 nor obeyed me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab
have performed the command of their father, which he had

our God, and according to all that Jehovah our God shall say,
21 so declare to us and we will do so. And I have declared to
you this day, but ye have not hearkened to the voice of Je-
hovah your God, and according to all the things for which he
22 hath sent me to you. And now knowing, know ye, that by the
sword and by famine and by pestilence shall ye die in the
place to which ye desire to go, that ye may sojourn there.

CHAPTER XLIII.

1 And it was that when Jeremiah had finished to speak to all
the people all the words of Jehovah their God, for which Je-
hovah their God had sent him to them all, even for these words,
2 then Azariah, the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan, the son of
Kareah, and all the proud men, said, speaking to Jeremiah,
Falsehood dost thou speak; Jehovah our God hath not sent thee
3 to say, Go not to Egypt to sojourn there; but Baruch, the son
of Neriah, rouses thee against us, to deliver us into the hand of
4 the Chaldeans, to slay us and to remove us to Babylon. So
Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the forces
and the whole people, did not hearken to the voice of Jehovah,
5 to dwell in the land of Judah: but Johanan, the son of Kareah,
and all the leaders of the forces, took the remnant of Judah,
who had returned from all the nations, to which they had been
6 driven, to dwell in the land of Judah, even the men, and the
women, and the children, and the king's daughters, and every
soul which Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the executioners, had
left with Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son Shaphan, and
with Jeremiah the prophet, and with Baruch, the son of Neriah;
7 and they went into the land of Egypt; for they did not obey
the voice of Jehovah; and they came as far as Tahpanhes.
8 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes,
9 saying,—Take in thine hand great stones, and hide them in the
clay in the brick-kiln, which is by the gate of Pharaoh's house
10 in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and thou
shalt say to them, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of
Israel, Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar, the king
of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne on these stones,
11 which I have hid, and he shall spread his tent over them; and
he shall come and smite the land of Egypt, those for death to
death, and those for captivity to captivity, and those for the
12 sword to the sword; and I will kindle a fire in the houses of
the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them
away captive, and roll up the land of Egypt as a shepherd rolls
up his garment; and he shall go forth thence in peace: and he
13 shall break in pieces the statues of Beth-shemesh, which is in
the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of Egypt shall
he burn with fire.

11 And Micah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard
12 all the words of Jehovah from the book; and he went down to
the king's house, to the scribe's chamber; and, lo, all the
princes were sitting there, Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the
son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gema-
riah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah,
13 and all the princes. And Micah declared to them all the words
which he had heard when Baruch read in the book in the ears
14 of the people. And all the princes sent Jehudi the son of
Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch,
saying, The roll in which thou didst read in the ears of the
people, take in thine hand and come: and Baruch the son of
15 Neriah, took the roll in his hand and came to them. And they
16 said to him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. And it was
that when they heard all the words, they feared every one as to
his neighbour, and said to Baruch, Declaring we shall declare to
17 the king all these words. And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell
us now, How didst thou write all these words from his mouth?
18 And Baruch said to them, With his mouth he pronounced these
19 words to me, and I wrote them on a book with ink. Then the
princes said to Baruch, Go and hide thyself, thou and Jeremiah,
and let no one know where ye be.
20 And they went to the king into the court, but laid up the
volume in the chamber of Elishama the scribe; and they de-
21 clared all the words in the ears of the king; and the king sent
Jehudi to fetch the roll, and he took it out of the chamber of
Elishama the scribe: and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king,
and in the ears of all the princes who stood before the king.
22 And the king was sitting in the winter-house, in the ninth
23 month, and there was a fire-hearth burning before him: and it
was that when Jehudi had read three or four pages, he cut it
with a penknife, and cast it into the fire which was in the fire-
hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire which was in
24 the fire-hearth. But neither the king nor any of his servants
feared, nor rent their garments, when they heard all these words.
25 Nevertheless Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah, inter-
ceded with the king, that he should not burn the roll; but he
26 hearkened not to them. And the king commanded Jerahmeel
the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and
Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe, and
Jeremiah the prophet: but Jehovah hid them.

27 Then came the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah, after the king
had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch had written
from the mouth of Jeremiah, saying,—
28 Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former
words which were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim, the king
29 of Judah hath burned: and to Jehoiakim, the king of Judah,
shalt thou say, Thus saith Jehovah, Thou hast burned this book,

15 Then all the men answered Jeremiah, even they who knew
that their wives burned incense to foreign gods, and all the
women who stood by, a great company, and all the people who
dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, saying,—
16 As to the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of
17 Jehovah, we will not hearken to thee; but we shall do what-
soever that goeth forth from our mouth, to burn incense to the
frame-work of heaven, and to pour out libations to it, as we did,
we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of
Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and we were satisfied
18 with bread, and were happy, and saw no evil: but from the
time we left off to burn incense to the frame-work of heaven,
and to pour out libations to it, we have been destitute of every-
thing, and have been consumed by the sword and famine.
19 And when we burned incense to the frame-work of heaven, and
poured out libations to it, did we without our men make cakes
to it to worship it, and pour out libations to it?
20 Then said Jeremiah to all the people, to the men, and to the
women, even to all the people who had returned to him the
answer, saying,—
21 The incense which ye burned in the cities of Judah and in
the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and
your princes, and all the people of the land, hath not Jehovah
22 remembered it? and hath it not come to his mind? Nay,
Jehovah could no longer bear *you* for the wickedness of your
doings, for the abominations which ye did; and reduced is your
land to a waste, and is become an astonishment and a curse, as
23 it appears at this day: because ye burned incense and sinned
against Jehovah, and hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah,
nor walked in his law, and statutes, and testimonies, therefore
hath this evil happened to you, as it appears at this day.

24 Jeremiah said again to all the people and to all the
women,—
Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye Judah who are in the land of
25 Egypt,—Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, saying,
Ye and your wives have spoken with your mouth and fulfilled
with your hands, saying, Doing we shall do our vows which
we have vowed, to burn incense to the frame-work of heaven
and to pour out libations to it: confirming ye will confirm
26 your vows, and doing ye will do your vows. Therefore hear
the word of Jehovah, all ye Judah who dwell in the land
of Egypt, Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith Je-
hovah, that my name shall no more be called upon by the
mouth of any man of Judah, saying, "The Lord Jehovah
27 liveth in all the land of Egypt." Behold I will watch over
them for evil and not for good, and consumed shall be all the
men of Judah, who are in the land of Egypt, by the sword
28 and by famine, until they be consumed: and they who shall

14 away to the Chaldeans: and Jeremiah said, It is false, I am
not falling away to the Chaldeans: but he did not hearken to
him. And Irijah laid hold on Jeremiah and brought him to
15 the princes. And the princes were incensed against Jeremiah,
and smote him, and put him in the house of prison, in the house
of Jonathan the scribe, for they made that the house of prison.
16 When Jeremiah came into the dungeon and into the cells,
17 and had been there many days, then Zedekiah the king sent
and took him out: and the king asked him privately and said,
Is there a word from Jehovah? and Jeremiah said, There is:
and he hath said, Into the hand of the king of Babylon shalt
18 thou be delivered. And Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah,
What sin have I done against thee and thy servants and this
people, that ye have delivered me into the house of prison?
19 And where are your prophets who have prophesied to you,
saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you nor
20 against this land? And now hear, I pray thee, O lord my
king: let my humble prayer be acceptable to thee, cause me
not to return into the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I should
21 die there. And King Zedekiah commanded, and they put
Jeremiah in the court of the prison, and gave him a crust of
bread daily, from the street of the bakers, until all the bread of
the city was consumed: and Jeremiah remained in the court of
the prison.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1 And Shephatiah, the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah, the son of
Pashur, and Jucal, the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur, the son
Malchiah, heard the words which Jeremiah had spoken to all
the people, saying,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah, He who remains in this city shall die
by the sword, famine, or pestilence; but he who goeth forth to
the Chaldeans shall live; and his life shall be to him a prey,
3 and he shall live. Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, this city shall
surely be delivered into the hand of the army of the king of
Babylon, and they shall take it.
4 And the princes said to the king, Let this man, we pray thee,
die; for he thus weakens the hands of the men of war who
remain in this city, and the hands of the people, by speaking
to them according to these words: for this man seeketh not the
5 peace of this people but their ruin. And King Zedekiah said to
them, Behold, he is in your hands, for the king can do nothing
6 against you. And they took Jeremiah and cast him into the
dungeon of Malchiah, the son of Hammelech, which was in the
court of the prison; and they let Jeremiah down with cords;
and there was no water in the dungeon, but mire, and Jeremiah
sunk in the mire.
7 Now Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, an eunuch, heard that they

had cast Jeremiah into the dungeon; and the king was sitting
8 in the gate of Benjamin; and Ebedmelech went forth from the
9 king's house and spake to the king, saying, O lord my king, these men have acted wickedly, in all that they have done to Jeremiah the Prophet, in throwing him into the dungeon, where if left alone he must die with hunger; for there is no
10 more bread in the city. Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take with thee hence thirty men, and bring up Jeremiah the Prophet from the dungeon before he die.
11 And Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the king's house, even to a place under the store-room, and took from thence rags torn and worn out, and let them down by
12 cords to Jeremiah in the dungeon. And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, said to Jeremiah, Put now these torn and worn-out rags under thine arm-holes under the cords. And Jeremiah
13 did so. Then they drew up Jeremiah by the cords, and raised him up from the dungeon; and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

14 And King Zedekiah sent and took Jeremiah the Prophet with him to the third entrance, which is in the house of Jehovah; and the king said to Jeremiah, "I ask thee a word; hide not a
15 word from me." And Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, If I tell thee, slaying, wilt thou not slay me? and if I give thee counsel thou
16 wilt not hearken to me. And Zedekiah the king sware to Jeremiah in secret, saying, Live doth Jehovah, who made us this soul, I will not slay thee, and I will not deliver thee unto
17 the hand of those who seek thy life. Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, If going thou wilt go forth unto the chiefs of the king of Babylon, live shall thy life, and this city shall not be burned
18 with fire, but live shalt thou and thy house: but if thou wilt not go forth to the chiefs of the king of Babylon, delivered shall be this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and burn it shall
19 they with fire, and thou shalt not escape from their hand. And King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, I fear the Jews who have gone over to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hands
20 and reproach me. Then Jeremiah said, They will not deliver thee: hearken, I pray thee, to the voice of Jehovah which I announce to thee, and it shall be well with thee, and live shall
21 thy soul: but if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word which
22 Jehovah has shewn to me,—Behold, even all the women who remain in the house of the king of Judah, shall go forth to the chiefs of the king of Babylon; and behold, they shall say, "Persuaded thee and prevailed over thee have thy familiar friends; fixed are thy feet in the mire, turned backward."
23 And all thy wives and thy children shall they bring out to the Chaldeans, and thou shalt not escape from their hand, for by the hand of the king of Babylon shalt thou be taken, and this city wilt thou burn with fire.

24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, Let no man know of these
25 words, and thou shalt not die: but if the princes hear that I have spoken with thee, and come to thee and say to thee, Tell us now what thou hast spoken to the king, hide nothing from us, and we will not kill thee, and what the king hath said to
26 thee; then shalt thou say to them, I humbly prayed the king that he would not make me to return to the house of Jonathan
27 to die there. And all the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him; and he told them according to those words which the king had commanded; and they said no more, for the conver-
28 sation had not been heard. And Jeremiah dwelt in the court of the prison to the day when Jerusalem was taken: and it happened according *to what he had said* that Jerusalem was taken.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1 In the ninth year of Zedekiah, the king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and
2 all his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it; in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth of the
3 month, the city was broken into; and all the chiefs of the king of Babylon entered and sat in the middle gate, even Nergal-sharezar, Samgar-nebo, Sarsechim, Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer, Rab-mag, and the rest of the chiefs of the king of Babylon.
4 And it was that when Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and all the men of war, saw them, they fled and went forth from the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and went forth by the way of the desert.
5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them, and took Zedekiah in the desert of Jericho; and they took him and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to Riblah, in the
6 land of Hamath, and he dealt judicially with him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah before his eyes; and all the nobles of Judah did the king of Babylon slay:
7 and he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with chains, to bring him to Babylon.
8 And the house of the king, and the houses of the people, the Chaldeans burned with fire, and the walls of Jerusalem they
9 pulled down: but the residue of the people who had remained in the city, and the deserters who had gone over to him, even the residue of the people who had been left, Nebuzar-adan, the
10 prince of the executioners, removed to Babylon. But the poor of the people, who had nothing, Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the executioners, left in the land of Judah, and gave them in that day vineyards and fields.
11 Now Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had given a charge respecting Jeremiah by Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the
12 executioners, saying, Take him, and set thine eyes on him, and

do him no harm; but as he shall say to thee do thou to him.
13 And Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the executioners, sent, and
Nebushasban, Rab-saris and Nergal-sharezar, Rab-mag, and all
14 the chiefs of the king of Babylon, yea, they sent and took Jere-
miah from the court of the prison, and delivered him to Geda-
liah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to lead him home;
and so he dwelt among the people.
15 But the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah when he was yet
16 shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Go and speak to
Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of
hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I bring my words on this city
for evil and not for good; and they shall be before thy face that
17 day: but I will deliver thee in that day, saith Jehovah, and
thou shalt not be delivered into the hand of the men, the face
18 of whom thou fearest; for I will surely rescue thee, by the
sword thou shalt not fall, and thy life shall be for a prey to thee,
because thou hast trusted in me, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER XL.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, after Nebu-
zar-adan, the prince of the executioners, had let him go from
Ramah, when he had taken him; for he had been bound with
chains among all the captivity of Jerusalem and Judah, who
2 were carried away to Babylon. But the prince of the execu-
tioners took Jeremiah, and said to him,—
3 Jehovah thy God hath spoken this evil as to this place: and
Jehovah hath brought it and done as he had spoken, because
ye have sinned against Jehovah and hearkened not to his voice;
4 therefore hath this evil come upon you. Now, as to thee, be-
hold, I have loosed thee this day from the chains which were
on thine hands; if it be good in thine eyes to come to Babylon,
come, and I will set mine eyes on thee; but if it be evil in thine
eyes to come to Babylon, forbear: behold, the whole land is
before thee; according to what is good and right in thine eyes
5 to go, thither go. (And he had not yet returned,) return then
to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the
king of Babylon hath set over the cities of Judah, and dwell
with him among the people, or go to whatever place it seemeth
good in thine eyes to go. And the prince of the executioners
6 gave him meat and a reward, and dismissed him: and Jere-
miah went to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and
dwelt with him among the people who had been left in the land.
7 When all the princes of the forces who were in the field, they
and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had set Gedaliah,
the son of Ahikam, over the land, and that he had committed
to him men, and women, and children, and the poor of the land,
8 who had not been removed to Babylon; then came to Gedaliah
to Mizpah, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and

Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tan-
humeth; and Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of
9 a Maachathite, they and their men. And Gedaliah, the son of
Shaphan, sware to them and to their men, saying, Fear not to
serve the Chaldeans, but submit yourselves and serve the king
10 of Babylon, and it shall be well with you: and I, behold, I will
dwell at Mizpah, to stand before the Chaldeans who may come
to us; and gather ye wine, and summer-fruits, and oil, and put
into your vessels, and dwell in the cities which ye have taken.
11 When also all the Jews which were in Moab, and among the
children of Ammon, and in Edom, and those in all countries,
heard that the king of Babylon had dismissed a remnant of
Judah, and had set over them Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the
12 son of Shaphan; then all the Jews came from all those places
whither they had been driven, yea, they came to the land of
Judah, unto Gedaliah, to Mizpah; and they gathered wine and
summer-fruits in great abundance.
13 And Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the
forces, who had been in the field, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,
14 and said to him: "Knowing, dost thou know that Baalis, the
king of the children of Ammon, hath sent Ishmael, the son of
Nethaniah, to smite thy life?" But Gedaliah, the son of Ahi-
15 kam, believed them not. And Johanan, the son of Kareah, said
privately to Gedaliah in Mizpah, saying, I will now go and will
smite Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and no one shall know:
why should he smite thy life, and all Judah, who are gathered
unto thee, be dispersed, and the remnant of Judah perish?
16 But Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, said to Johanan, the son of
Kareah, By no means do this thing; for thou speakest falsely
of Ishmael.

CHAPTER XLI.

1 And it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael, the son
of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal seed, and the
chiefs of the king, even ten men, came with him to Gedaliah,
the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and did eat bread there together
2 in Mizpah. Then Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, rose up, and
the ten men who were with him, and smote Gedaliah, the son
of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword; yea, they slew
3 him whom the king of Babylon had set over the land: and the
Jews who were with him, even with Gedaliah, in Mizpah, and the
Chaldeans who were found there, men of war, did Ishmael smite.
4 And it was the following day, after he had killed Gedaliah,
5 and no man knew it, that men came from Shechem, and
from Shiloh, and from Samaria, fourscore, having their heads
shaven, and their garments rent, and having cut themselves,
with an oblation and incense, to offer them in the house of
6 Jehovah. And Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, went out from
Mizpah to meet them, walking along and weeping; and it was

that when he met them, he said to them, Come to Gedaliah, the
7 son of Ahikam. And it was that when they had come to the
midst of the city, Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, slew them, nigh
the middle of the trench, he and the men who were with him.
8 But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, Slay
us not; for we have hidden stores in the field, wheat, and barley,
and oil, and honey; and he forbare, and slew them not among
their brethren.
9 Now the trench into which Ishmael cast all the carcases of
the men whom he had smitten along with Gedaliah, was that
which King Asa had made on account of Baasha, the king of
Israel; this did Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, fill with the slain.
10 Then Ishmael took captive all the remnant of the people who
were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people
who had been left in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan, the prince
of the executioners, had committed to the care of Gedaliah, the
son of Ahikam; yea, Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, took them
and went, that he might pass over to the children of Ammon.
11 But Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the
forces who were with him, heard of all the evil which Ishmael,
12 the son of Nethaniah, had done; and they took all the men,
and went forth to fight with Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah,
13 and found him at the great waters which are in Gibeon. And
it was that when all the people who were with Ishmael saw
Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the forces
14 who were with him, they rejoiced: and all the people whom
Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah, turned, and returned,
15 and went with Johanan, the son of Kareah; but Ishmael, the
son of Nethaniah, escaped with eight men from Johanan, and
went to the children of Ammon.
16 And Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the
forces who were with him, took all the remnant of the people,
whom he had recovered from Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah,
from Mizpah, after he had smitten Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam,
strong men, men of war, and women, and children, and eunuchs,
17 whom he had recovered from Gibeon; and they went and dwelt
in Geruth-Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, that they might
18 proceed to enter into Egypt, on account of the Chaldeans, for they
feared them, because Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, had smitten
Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had set over the land.

CHAPTER XLII.

1 Then came near all the leaders of the forces and Johanan,
the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah, the son of Hoshaiah, and all
the people, from the least to the greatest, and said to Jeremiah
2 the prophet,—Let our petition, we pray thee, be acceptable to
thee; pray now for us to Jehovah thy God in behalf of this
remnant, for we are left a few out of many, as thine eyes see

3 us; and let Jehovah thy God shew us the way in which we are
to walk, and the thing which we are to do.
4 And Jeremiah said to them, I have heard; behold, I will
pray to Jehovah your God according to your words; and it
shall be that whatsoever word Jehovah shall answer you, I will
5 declare it to you; I will hide nothing from you. Then they
said to Jeremiah, Let Jehovah be between us a faithful and
true witness, except we do according to all the words which
6 Jehovah thy God shall send to us: whether good or evil, the
voice of Jehovah our God, for which we send thee to him, will
we obey: for well will it be with us, when we obey the voice
of Jehovah our God.
7 And it was that at the end of ten days the word of Jehovah
8 came to Jeremiah; and he called Johanan, the son of Kareah,
and all the leaders of the forces, who were with him, and all the
9 people, from the least to the greatest; and said to them,—
Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me
10 to lay humbly your prayer before him, If dwelling ye will
dwell in this land, then will I build you and not pull you down,
and plant you and not pluck you up; for I repent of the evil
11 which I have brought on you. Fear not the face of the king
of Babylon, whose face ye do fear; fear him not, saith Jehovah,
for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his
12 hand; and I will shew mercies to you, and he will have mercy
13 on you, and cause you to dwell in your own land. But if ye
say, We will not dwell in this land, nor obey the voice of
14 Jehovah your God, Saying, No, but to the land of Egypt will
we go, where we shall not see war, and the sound of the
trumpet we shall not hear, and for bread we shall not hunger,
15 and there will we dwell. Now, therefore, hear the word of
Jehovah, ye remnant of Judah, for thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
the God of Israel, If setting ye set your face to enter into
16 Egypt, and ye go there to sojourn, then it shall be that the
sword which ye fear, shall overtake you there, even in the land
of Egypt, and the famine which ye dread shall lay hold on you
17 there, even in the land of Egypt, and there ye shall die: and
all the men who have set their faces to go into Egypt to so-
journ there, shall die by the sword, or by famine, or by pesti-
lence; and not one of them shall remain or escape from the evil
18 which I shall bring on them. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts,
the God of Israel, As my wrath and mine indignation have
been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so mine in-
dignation shall be poured out on you when ye go into Egypt:
and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a
curse, and a reproach; and ye shall no more see this place.
19 Jehovah hath spoken against you, ye remnant of Judah: go
not into Egypt; knowing, know ye that I have made a protest
20 to you this day. For ye deceived your own souls, when ye
sent me to Jehovah your God, saying, Pray for us to Jehovah

our God, and according to all that Jehovah our God shall say,
21 so declare to us and we will do so. And I have declared to
you this day, but ye have not hearkened to the voice of Je-
hovah your God, and according to all the things for which he
22 hath sent me to you. And now knowing, know ye, that by the
sword and by famine and by pestilence shall ye die in the
place to which ye desire to go, that ye may sojourn there.

CHAPTER XLIII.

1 And it was that when Jeremiah had finished to speak to all
the people all the words of Jehovah their God, for which Je-
hovah their God had sent him to them all, even for these words,
2 then Azariah, the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan, the son of
Kareah, and all the proud men, said, speaking to Jeremiah,
Falsehood dost thou speak; Jehovah our God hath not sent thee
3 to say, Go not to Egypt to sojourn there; but Baruch, the son
of Neriah, rouses thee against us, to deliver us into the hand of
4 the Chaldeans, to slay us and to remove us to Babylon. So
Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the leaders of the forces
and the whole people, did not hearken to the voice of Jehovah,
5 to dwell in the land of Judah: but Johanan, the son of Kareah,
and all the leaders of the forces, took the remnant of Judah,
who had returned from all the nations, to which they had been
6 driven, to dwell in the land of Judah, even the men, and the
women, and the children, and the king's daughters, and every
soul which Nebuzar-adan, the prince of the executioners, had
left with Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, the son Shaphan, and
with Jeremiah the prophet, and with Baruch, the son of Neriah;
7 and they went into the land of Egypt; for they did not obey
the voice of Jehovah; and they came as far as Tahpanhes.
8 And the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes,
9 saying,—Take in thine hand great stones, and hide them in the
clay in the brick-kiln, which is by the gate of Pharaoh's house
10 in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and thou
shalt say to them, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of
Israel, Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar, the king
of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne on these stones,
11 which I have hid, and he shall spread his tent over them; and
he shall come and smite the land of Egypt, those for death to
death, and those for captivity to captivity, and those for the
12 sword to the sword; and I will kindle a fire in the houses of
the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them
away captive, and roll up the land of Egypt as a shepherd rolls
up his garment; and he shall go forth thence in peace: and he
13 shall break in pieces the statues of Beth-shemesh, which is in
the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of Egypt shall
he burn with fire.

CHAPTER XLIV.

1 The word which came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews
who dwelt in the land of Egypt, who dwelt at Migdol and at
Tahpanhes, and at Memphis, even in the land of Pathros, say-
ing,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, ye have
seen all the evil which I have brought on Jerusalem and on all
the cities of Judah; and behold they are a waste this day, and
3 no one dwells in them, because of the wickedness which they
had done to provoke me, by going to burn incense and to serve
foreign gods, whom they had not known, neither they nor their
4 fathers: and I sent to them all my servants the prophets,
rising early and sending, saying, Do not, I pray you, the thing
5 of this abomination, which I hate; but they hearkened not, nor
inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness and not to burn
6 incense to foreign gods. Then my indignation and my wrath
were poured out and were kindled in the cities of Judah and in
the streets of Jerusalem, and they became a waste as at this
7 day. And now, thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel,
Why do ye this great evil against your own souls, to cut off
from you man and woman, child and suckling, even from the
8 midst of Judah, so as to leave you no remnant remaining, to
provoke me by the works of your hands, by burning incense to
foreign gods in the land of Egypt, to which ye are gone to
dwell there, that ye may be cut off, and that ye may be a curse
9 and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? Have ye
forgotten the evils of your fathers and the evils of the kings of
Judah, and the evils of their wives, and your own evils, and the
evils of your wives, which they did in the land of Judah and
10 in the streets of Jerusalem: and they have not humbled them-
selves to this day, nor have they feared, nor walked in my law
and in my statutes, which I had set before you and before your
fathers.
11 Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel,
Behold, I set my face against you for evil, even to cut off all
12 Judah; and I will take the remnant of Judah, who have set
their face to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and
they shall all be consumed in the land of Egypt; they shall
fall by the sword, by famine shall they be consumed, from the
least to the greatest; by the sword and by famine shall they
die, and they shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and
13 a curse, and a reproach: and I will visit them who dwell in
Egypt, as I visited Jerusalem, with the sword, and famine, and
14 pestilence. And there shall be none to escape among the rem-
nant of Judah, who have come to sojourn here, even in the
land of Egypt, and to return to the land of Judah, on return-
ing to which they set their minds to dwell there, for they shall
not return except those who have escaped.

15 Then all the men answered Jeremiah, even they who knew
that their wives burned incense to foreign gods, and all the
women who stood by, a great company, and all the people who
dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, saying,—
16 As to the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of
17 Jehovah, we will not hearken to thee; but we shall do what-
soever that goeth forth from our mouth, to burn incense to the
frame-work of heaven, and to pour out libations to it, as we did,
we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of
Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and we were satisfied
18 with bread, and were happy, and saw no evil: but from the
time we left off to burn incense to the frame-work of heaven,
and to pour out libations to it, we have been destitute of every-
thing, and have been consumed by the sword and famine.
19 And when we burned incense to the frame-work of heaven, and
poured out libations to it, did we without our men make cakes
to it to worship it, and pour out libations to it?
20 Then said Jeremiah to all the people, to the men, and to the
women, even to all the people who had returned to him the
answer, saying,—
21 The incense which ye burned in the cities of Judah and in
the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and
your princes, and all the people of the land, hath not Jehovah
22 remembered it? and hath it not come to his mind? Nay,
Jehovah could no longer bear *you* for the wickedness of your
doings, for the abominations which ye did; and reduced is your
land to a waste, and is become an astonishment and a curse, as
23 it appears at this day: because ye burned incense and sinned
against Jehovah, and hearkened not to the voice of Jehovah,
nor walked in his law, and statutes, and testimonies, therefore
hath this evil happened to you, as it appears at this day.

24 Jeremiah said again to all the people and to all the
women,—
Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye Judah who are in the land of
25 Egypt,—Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, saying,
Ye and your wives have spoken with your mouth and fulfilled
with your hands, saying, Doing we shall do our vows which
we have vowed, to burn incense to the frame-work of heaven
and to pour out libations to it: confirming ye will confirm
26 your vows, and doing ye will do your vows. Therefore hear
the word of Jehovah, all ye Judah who dwell in the land
of Egypt, Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith Je-
hovah, that my name shall no more be called upon by the
mouth of any man of Judah, saying, "The Lord Jehovah
27 liveth in all the land of Egypt." Behold I will watch over
them for evil and not for good, and consumed shall be all the
men of Judah, who are in the land of Egypt, by the sword
28 and by famine, until they be consumed: and they who shall

escape from the sword and return from the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, shall be few in number; and all the remnant of Judah, who have entered into the land of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose word shall stand, mine or theirs.
29 And this shall be a sign to you, saith Jehovah, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that standing my words shall stand against you for evil,—Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will deliver Pharaoh-Hophra into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I delivered Zedekiah, the king of Judah, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, his enemy, and who sought his life.

CHAPTER XLV.

1 The word which Jeremiah the prophet spake to Baruch, the son of Neriah, when he wrote these words in a book from the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, saying,—
2 Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, concerning thee, O
3 Baruch: Thou hast said, Woe now to me! for Jehovah hath added grief to my sorrow; I am wearied with my sighing, and
4 rest have I not found. Thus shalt thou say to him, Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, what I builded I pull down, and what I
5 planted I pluck up, even this whole land; and seekest thou great things for thyself? seek not; for behold I am bringing evil on all flesh, saith Jehovah; and I will give thee thy life as a prey in all the places whither thou wilt go.

CHAPTER XLVI.

1 The word of Jehovah which came to Jeremiah the prophet
2 concerning all the nations: of Egypt, concerning the army of Pharaoh-Necho, the king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates, at Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah:

3 Prepare ye the buckler and shield,
And move on to battle;
4 Tie the horses, and go up, ye horsemen;
Stand in your helmets,
Brighten the lances, put on the coats of mail.
5 Why have I seen them broken, turned backward!
Even their valiants have been smitten,
And by flight have they fled and looked not back;
Terror is on every side, saith Jehovah;
6 Let not the swift flee away,
Nor the valiant escape:
In the north, on the bank of the river Euphrates,
Shall they stumble and fall.

7 Who is this that like a river riseth up,
Like floods swelling, its waters!
8 Egypt like a river riseth up,
And like floods swelling, its waters;
For he saith, I will go up and cover the land,
I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.
9 Go up, ye horses; toss, ye chariots;
Go forth, ye the valiant;
The Ethiopians and Lybians, who hold the shield,
And the Lydians, who hold and stretch the bow.

10 But this is the day of the Lord, Jehovah of hosts,
The day of vengeance, to avenge on his adversaries;
And devour shall the sword and be satiated,
And inebriated shall it be with their blood;
For a sacrifice hath the Lord, Jehovah of hosts,
In the land of the north, by the river Euphrates.
11 Go up to Gilead, and take rosin,
Thou virgin, daughter of Egypt!
In vain dost thou multiply medicines;
There is no healing for thee.
12 Heard have the nations of thy disgrace,
And by thine outcry filled is the earth;
For the valiant against the valiant has stumbled,
And both have fallen together.

13 The word which Jehovah spake to Jeremiah the prophet respecting the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to smite the land of Egypt:
14 Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol,
Publish in Noph, in Tahpanhes say,—
Stand and prepare thyself,
For devoured hath the sword those around thee.
15 How scattered are thy valiants!
They stood not, for Jehovah hath driven them.
16 He hath multiplied; they stumbled,
Yea, fell, each on his friend:
And they said, "Rise, and let us return
To our people, and to the land of our nativity,
From the face of the wasting sword.
17 They cried there, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt,
Is a king of trouble;
He hath passed over the set time.
18 Live do I, saith the king,
Jehovah of hosts is his name;
For as Tabor is in the mountains,
And as Carmel is by the sea, *so* will he come.

19 Thy furniture of transmigration prepare,

Thou inhabitant of Egypt;
For Noph shall be a solitude,
Yea, it shall be wasted, without an inhabitant.
20 A beautiful heifer is Egypt;
Distress from the north cometh, it cometh.
21 Her mercenaries also in the midst of her
Are like the bullocks of the stall;
For these also shall turn their backs,
They shall flee together, they shall not stand;
For the day of calamity is come upon them,
The time of their visitation.
22 Her voice shall be like that of the serpent;
For with power shall they come,
And with axes shall they come against her,
Like hewers of wood.
23 Cut down shall they thy forest, saith Jehovah,
That it may not be investigated;
For they have multiplied more than locusts,
And they are without number.
24 Ashamed is the daughter of Egypt,
Delivered into the hand of the north people.

25 Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, hath said,
Behold, I will visit the multitude of No,
Pharaoh also, and Egypt,
And her gods and her kings,
Even Pharaoh and those who trust in him;
26 And I will give them into the hand
Of those who seek their life,
And into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar,
The king of Babylon,
And into the hand of his servants:
But it shall afterwards be inhabited
As in days of old, saith Jehovah.

27 But fear not thou, my servant Jacob,
Nor be thou, Israel, broken in mind;
For behold, I will save thee from far,
And thy seed from the land of their captivity:
Yea, return shall Jacob, and rest,
And be secure, and none will terrify *him*.
28 Fear thou not, my servant Jacob,
Saith Jehovah, for I am with thee;
For I will make an end of all the nations
To which I have driven thee;
But of thee will I not make an end:
Yet I will chastise thee in moderation,
And will not wholly cut thee off.

CHAPTER XLVII.

1 The word of Jehovah which came to Jeremiah the prophet, concerning the Philistines, before Pharaoh smote Gaza:

2 Thus saith Jehovah,—
Behold, waters ascend from the north,
And they shall be an overflowing flood,
And shall overflow the land and all in it,
The city and its inhabitants;
And cry aloud shall all men,
And howl shall every inhabitant of the land.

3 For the noisy sound of the hoofs of his steeds,
For the commotion of his chariots,
For the rumbling of his wheels,
Not look shall fathers to their children,
On account of the feebleness of *their* hands;

4 Because of the day which is come,
To destroy all the Philistines,
To cut off Tyre and Sidon,
All the residue of their strength;
For Jehovah lays waste the Philistines,
The remnant of the island of Caphtor.

5 Come is baldness on Gaza,
Destroyed is Ashkelon;
The remnant of their valley!
How long wilt thou rend thyself?

6 Ah! sword of Jehovah!
How long wilt not thou rest?
Hide thyself in thy scabbard, rest and be still.

7 How canst thou rest? since Jehovah
Hath commanded it against Ashkelon,
And against the shore of the sea;
There hath he appointed it.

END OF VOLUME FOURTH.

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